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To,

Mr Editor,

Princeton Theology Review

with respects of

Levitt Hunt.















AGRIPPA;

OR,

THE EVANGELISTS.

HISTORICAL POINT OF VIEW.

BY

LEAVITT HUNT.

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1857.

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Publishers and Importers, 321 Broadway.

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“THIS man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar,” was the reply of King Agrippa to the defense of Saint Paul.

No brighter example of justice can be found than the equity extended by this Pagan king, bearing up against an exasperated, intolerant people, whom policy would conciliate, to shelter Saint Paul, oppressed.

To his justice and intelligence, Saint Paul himself pays willing tribute.

The name of *Agrippa*, typical of an unprejudiced mind, is given, therefore, as the title to this book.

We will not discuss the numerous gospels which were current for ages, nor the time nor authorship of the present canonical books of the New Testament—all vital questions, affecting its authenticity. The examination of the Gospels recognized to-day is sufficient, for there are few who can even withstand the tradition of fifteen centuries.

The Gospels, as a general thing, are believed in precisely the same manner that the Parsee, Hindoo, Chinese, and Mohammedan accepts the Avesta, Vedas, Kings and Koran.

It is easy to call ourselves by what name we please.

All holy books are, however, composed of a certain quantity of facts or ideas.

If we accept these merely because they are contained in this or that book, our belief would depend, almost invariably, upon the religion of that country where Providence placed our

birth. It is the detail, the component parts of our holy books, which we must study, before we can say with truth, that we believe them.

Therefore it is that we shall discuss the Gospels exegetically.

The Evangelists endeavored to carry out the Messianical idea. This preconceived idea was the cause of the miracles referring to and performed by Christ. This was the reason that vivid poetical descriptions in the Old Testament, glorifying God, and presumed Messianical passages were made to serve as moulds for events befalling Christ ; for with the Evangelists, Christ is the Lord.

And to prove this idea, prophetical passages are adduced disconnectedly, and allegory becomes a fact.

In this short work, every effort has been made, in as concise a manner as possible, to set forth the greatness of Christ, and the high moral

contained in the Gospels ; besides this, many facts related are deduced from prototypes ; allegories quoted as facts are indicated ; prophecies are carefully examined, and contradictions are exposed.

It is vain to pronounce judgment upon a mass of ideas before comprehending each individual one ; but, should any one, after such study, have a doubt, we would claim for reason the benefit of that doubt.

# CONTENTS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

	PAGE
Of the Inspiration of the Evangelists . . . . .	1
Source of the Idea of a Messiah . . . . .	6
Cause of the easy Acceptation of this Idea among the Jews . . . .	7
Gradual Development of the Idea of a Messiah . . . . .	8
Of the Messiah from David's Race . . . . .	9
Injustice of the belief in the necessity for Salvation of having even a knowledge of a Messiah . . . . .	10
Of Religion . . . . .	11
Of the Prophetical Passages adduced by the Evangelists . . . .	12
Duration, Martyrdom, Testimony, adduced as Proofs of the Divine- ness of a Religion are inconclusive . . . . .	13

## CHAPTER I.

Genealogy of Christ . . . . .	19
The Miraculous Conception . . . . .	23

## CHAPTER II.

Events accompanying the Birth and Infancy of Christ.—The Star . .	27
The Reason Gold and Frankincense were presented to Christ . . .	33
The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt . . . . .	33
The Massacre of the Innocents . . . . .	36
Return of the Holy Family from Egypt . . . . .	38



	PAGE
CHAPTER III.	
Of John the Baptist foretold by Isaiah . . . . .	41
John the Baptist foretold by the Prophet Malachi . . . . .	43
Of John the Baptist's Clothing and Food . . . . .	43
The Baptism of Christ . . . . .	44
Of Baptism . . . . .	46
CHAPTER IV.	
The Three Temptations of Christ by the Devil . . . . .	50
Second Temptation . . . . .	54
Third Temptation . . . . .	55
The Casting of John the Baptist into Prison . . . . .	60
Christ's Journey into Galilee . . . . .	61
CHAPTER V.	
Christ's Sermon on the Mount . . . . .	64
CHAPTER VIII.	
Christ stilleth the Tempest . . . . .	73
Christ driveth the Devils out of Gergesenes . . . . .	75
CHAPTER IX.	
St. Matthew is called to become a Disciple . . . . .	78
The Resuscitation of Jairus' Daughter . . . . .	79
CHAPTER X.	
Names and Number of the Apostles . . . . .	80
Second Coming of Christ . . . . .	81
Resurrection and Last Judgment . . . . .	83
CHAPTER XI.	
Mutual Attestation of Christ and John the Baptist . . . . .	86
CHAPTER XII.	
Christ, in performing Miracles, desires not to be known . . . . .	89

# CONTENTS.

ix

PAGE

## CHAPTER XIII.

Christ's Reason for speaking in Parables.—St. Matthew's Reason 93

## CHAPTER XVII.

The Transfiguration . . . . . 95

## CHAPTER XXI.

Christ enters Jerusalem riding upon an Ass . . . . . 98

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Christ's Prophecy against the Pharisees . . . . . 101

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Christ foretells the Destruction of the Temple . . . . . 103

## CHAPTER XXVI.

The Celebration of the Feast of the Passover; or, the Last Supper 105

Denial of Christ by Peter . . . . . 107

## CHAPTER XXVII.

The History of Judas.—The Trial and Crucifixion of Christ.—The

Inscription, Two Thieves, Eclipse, Christ's Exclamation . . . 109

The Trial of Christ . . . . . 113

The Crucifixion of Christ . . . . . 116

The Two Thieves . . . . . 118

The Eclipse . . . . . 120

Christ's Exclamation . . . . . 121

Events which occurred at the Death of Christ . . . . . 122

Events which should have occurred at the Coming of the Messiah 124

Events prophesied by St. Matthew, as accompanying the Second

Coming of Christ, and the Time thereof . . . . . 125

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Burial, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ.—The Embalm-  
ment of Christ . . . . . 126

The Guard of the Sepulchre . . . . . 127

	PAGE
The Length of Time Christ was in the Sepulchre . . . .	128
The First Visit to the Sepulchre . . . . .	129
The Angels of the Sepulchre . . . . .	130
The First Appearance of Christ . . . . .	130
Christ's Meeting with his Disciples . . . . .	131
The Last Interview . . . . .	132
The Ascension . . . . .	132

## INTRODUCTION.

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### OF THE INSPIRATION OF THE EVANGELISTS.

THE systems of religion which have principally affected mankind, have had their rise in Asia.

The Asiatics believe their holy writings to have been communicated to man in a miraculous manner.

The writing upon the two tables of the testimony, given to Moses, was the writing of God.—Exod. 32 : 16.

The Parsee believes the holy books of the Avesta or Word to have been revealed to Zoroaster by Ormuzd.—*Zend Avesta*, Tom. ii., p. 189.

It was Menu, the son of Brahma, who dictated the civil and religious laws of the Hindoos.—*Laws of Menu*. Gaudama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was an incarnation of the Divinity.

The state religion of China, systematized by

Confucius, forms, in so far, an exception, as it is based upon the virtuous invariability of the soul, and not upon the miraculous; but even here, miraculous effects are deduced from this same invariability.

With regard to the Christian religion, the general rule remains the same.

The Roman Catholic Church has always taught the inspiration of the evangelists, but an extreme difference of opinion has, also, always existed as to the manner and extent of this inspiration.

On the one hand, the early apologists, Athenagoras and others, taught that the holy writers were mere instruments of the divine power, and, in many instances, compared them to musical instruments played upon by the spirit of God.—*Legat.* vii., p. 8.

“Θεοῦ πνεῦμα ὡς ὄργανα χεινηκὸς τὰ τῶν προφητῶν στόματα.”

Opposed to these, the Montanists and other sectarians believed the inspiration of the evangelists to consist simply in an unconscious, ecstatic state of being.

The church disagreed with both of these sects, and assumed the belief that the evangelists were filled with the divine power, but, at the same time, in possession of their consciousness, and thus in no wise resembled heathen ascetics.

So Saint Augustin says :

“Because the Evangelists were inspired men, they have not said all things, but only that which they knew as men.”—*Tractatio in Johan.*

Did Saint John know, as a man, the truth of the first verse of the Gospel ascribed to him ?

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

The nature of this idea excludes the possibility of its truth as having been communicated to Saint John by the ordinary inspiration common to man, well, however, by a supernatural inspiration ; but a man raised to a knowledge of the supernatural becomes, “*de facto*,” superhuman.\*

The decision, therefore, of the R. C. Church leaves the belief undetermined whether the Gospel be of human or divine diction.

An inspiration fully equal to that of the Evangelists is believed to reside in the Roman Catholic Church, sole possible heiress of that traditional knowledge, deemed absolutely necessary for the comprehension of the holy writers, and which subordinates the signification of the Scriptures to the

\* The contemplation of every object in nature awakens in us the sentiment of the existence of a supreme being, and every pulsation transforms this sentiment into a confirmed belief ; but who pretends to have a knowledge of the ways or history of God ?

interpretation of the Church. Thus St. Augustin says, "I would not believe the Evangelists," "*Nisi me commoveret ecclesiæ catholicæ auctoritas.*"

The Protestants felt the necessity of settling, definitively, the doctrine of the supernatural inspiration of the holy writers, their belief being based solely thereupon.

The question now arose whether this inspiration extended to the very words and syllables or only to certain parts such as the prophecies and doctrinal points.

To accept of a total inspiration would be to deny the existence of a single error in the scriptures, which, to-day, no one, I believe, would have the boldness to assert, but to accept of a partial inspiration would be inconsequent; besides, who is to decide upon those parts especially inspired.

Nevertheless, certain men, having become the champions of a system, have undertaken to level all obstacles of discordance, and to smooth down all contradictions.

Thus Luther remarks:

"The Evangelists were satisfied to show, in an artless but distinct manner, that Christ descended from Abraham and David; for they considered the promise of God more than the most exact genealogical-list."



Since Saint Matthew has not only stated that Christ was of the family of David, but has also undertaken to transmit, exactly, the whole genealogical-list of that family, we are obliged, in justice, to accept of both of these statements as equally serious.

To accept, therefore, of the divine inspiration of the Evangelists, and then to choose certain passages as particularly truthful, is not only inconsistent, but presumptuous.

It was, probably, from a conviction of the impossibility of harmonizing the contradictions of the Evangelists with the doctrine of their infallibility, or supernatural inspiration, that determined Archdeacon Paley to devote, in his work, entitled, "Evidences of Christianity," a chapter of only thirty sentences to what he calls the "Discrepancies of the Gospels." What is more worthy of remark is, that he has devoted this entire chapter to the exposition of certain discrepancies between Jewish, Latin, and English historians.

He has, indeed, ventured to quote a sentence from St. Mark, referring to the appearance of Christ after his resurrection, but he has not, on that account, pointed out any one of the several discrepancies which are contained in that theme.

We close here this cursory examination of the

doctrine of inspiration, both supernatural and natural—two conflicting doctrines, one of which is allied to the doctrine of the free will of man, while the other enters naturally into the system of belief of those who accept of the doctrine of predestination.

The extent of the belief of the inspiration of the Evangelists must be determined by individual faith or enlightenment.

#### SOURCE OF THE IDEA OF A MESSIAH.

Hope exists in the first instinctive effort of man for self-preservation—it is the mover to action through life—it survives every other sentiment—it lives in the future infinite.

The Jewish prophets possessed, in common with all men, the innate sentiment of hope. To this sentiment was bound, in their minds, a strong consciousness of absolute goodness, truth, and justice—abstract ideas which they would fain have made one with human nature—men made angels—the golden age arrive—their dreams fulfilled; and, as the idea of a certain state of things is naturally allied in the imagination to a person capable of realizing them, a connecting-link—a being possessed of superhuman qualities—is here of necessity; but no sooner neces-

sary to their mind than a Messiah is created in their imagination.

Thus the Messiah is the personification of an idea. Nor can this be denied; for the Messiah, among the Jews, reduced to his just proportions, constitutes, even to-day, but the expression of the sentiment of hope.\*

This unintentional personification of an idea will end when man ceases to confound the efforts of his imagination with reality.

CAUSE OF THE EASY ACCEPTATION OF THIS IDEA AMONG  
THE JEWS.

The Jews being, as a nation, extremely egotistic,† ascribed to the command of God both the good actions and the atrocities they committed (Numbers 31 : 2). They believed the Divinity to be most particularly occupied with their interest, and conse-

\* The expectation of a Messiah remains among the Jews in disregard of Haggai's testimony—ch. 2 : 20–24—which declares Zerubbabel to be the Saviour.

Besides, Jeremiah 30 : 9 and Ezekiel 34 : 23 prophecy the Messiah in David resuscitated. To this may be added that Zechariah, 6 : 9–12, is commanded to crown Joshua, the son of Josedech, as the Messiah.

† Quintillian calls them “*perniciosam caeteris gentem.*”—*Orationes Institutiones*, Lib. 3, cap. 7.

quently accepted, with great facility, the idea of a Messiah, who should so much increase their welfare.

By taking their political condition into consideration, in their appreciation of divine justice, the Jews arrogantly supposed absolute justice to adjust itself to their political acts! Thus, by ascribing, indiscriminately, their actions to a command of God, they accused the Divinity of mutability or injustice; for the immutability of Providence is itself the normal or natural order of things, which, in its turn, constitutes justice.

#### GRADUAL DEVELOPEMENT OF THE IDEA OF A MESSIAH.

The idea of a Messiah, at first but vague and undeveloped, was, by degrees, defined with more precision. It gained influence in critical moments, when an occasion presented itself to give expression to a strong sentiment of hope.

Is the nation threatened with an invasion (Isaiah 7), immediately the speedy coming of a Messiah is foretold, at which event they are to be rehabilitated, especially in their material and political position.

Thus the Jews base their future happiness upon an ideal external cause, rather than upon the practice of the sentiment of justice instinctive to man,

and even expressed, and, for their nation, set in historical relief since ages by the intelligent experience of some of their forefathers. For what is more truly divine than the decalogue!

The still existing want of this external cause—a Messiah—through whose supernatural agency the Jew expects such great spiritual and material advantages, explains, partly, his wavering basis of moral action, and, consequently, his little maintenance of dignity.

#### OF THE MESSIAH FROM DAVID'S RACE.

The great preëminence of the family of David sufficed to designate it as the most worthy for a Messiah to proceed from. The same natural effect of constituted preëminence we see continually repeated among despotic nations whose political savours are almost invariably expected to proceed from great monarchical houses.

This half deification of certain families has its origin in a want of manly feeling and individual dignity among the mass.

Finally, it was of great importance to St. Matthew to draw Christ's lineal descent from David, as the Jews would accept of a Messiah from that source only; but St. Matthew's deduction of a con-

clusive argument in favor of Christ's royal parentage by ingrafting him on the most brilliant Jewish genealogical-tree, although most flattering to the local mindedness of the Jews, yet, being unsupported even by his own evidence, its acceptance is repulsive to those who seek the truth.

INJUSTICE OF THE BELIEF IN THE NECESSITY FOR SALVATION  
OF HAVING EVEN A KNOWLEDGE OF A MESSIAH.

It does not belong to man to dispute the justice of God nor to pretend to understand the wisdom of his eternal decrees. Who pretends to know why the seasons roll in their existing succession! What pretension, then, to assert the favoritism of God, to believe in the unequal repartition of the benefits of Providence.

Inequality among men arises from the influence of different external causes, and from the motive efforts of man's will. It is the infinite combination of these internal and external forces which causes the endless variety in the condition and capacity of man; the very basis of this variety lies in the immutability of the laws of nature or Providence. What presumption, then, to believe the predecessors of a Messiah, less blessed than those born afterwards, what low egotism to believe those more favored in

the sight of God, who have a knowledge of Christ than those who are ignorant of him, such a belief would show a distrust in the never-ceasing equal care of Providence; to believe some better or worse cared for is to pretend to understand the wisdom of God—is to question the justice of God.

## OF RELIGION.

The sentiment of right and wrong basis of all moral action existed necessarily since the creation of man, as one of the component faculties of his spiritual organization.

The practice of moral and right principles, founded upon this internal sentiment of justice, suffices to constitute a religion based upon truth. Upon a more divine basis than this no religion reposes.

The test of a good doctrine of a religion is the possibility of deducing therefrom a principle of moral action; for *a religion must be based upon good actions to be useful to mankind.*

Moral action is as essential to a useful religion as the vain assertion of a belief is useless.

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? Can faith save him?”—St. James, ch. 2, vs. 14.

“Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord,



shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven."—St. Matthew, ch. 7, vs. 21.

Faith is the deep conviction of the truth of a thing based upon sentiment and reason.

The belief in certain doctrines and statements constitutes, indeed, *a* faith or local system of religion. *The* faith of mankind, however, cannot be inclosed within any formula of belief; for although subjectively always the same as corresponding to the sentiment of invariable truth, yet objectively it is infinite.

OF THE PROPHETICAL PASSAGES ADDUCED BY THE EVANGELISTS.

Of the evangelists, St. Matthew has taken the most pains to model fitly his statement of events to prophetical passages; and sometimes, still worse, to make passages of the prophets harmonize with his accounts; but if, with the most expert hand, he had exactly fitted the corresponding parts, his carpentering would prove exactly nothing, as all foundation of evidence is wanting: for what is more vain than the attempt to prove a case of accomplished prophecy, by an adduction of the prophecy itself in favor of one's own account; this would necessitate

the admission of the premises, namely, that the event to be proved was true.

DURATION, MARTYRDOM, TESTIMONY, ADDUCED AS PROOFS OF  
THE DIVINENESS OF A RELIGION, ARE INCONCLUSIVE.

How absurd the argument which draws a proof of the divine origin of a religion from the length of time it has been received as true ; for have not evil doctrines existed and been accepted among all nations as most holy, since long before the Christian era ? Who believes therefrom, however, that evil is good ?

The number of martyrs sacrificed to a religion is of no weight as proof of the superhuman origin of that religion, but rather in an inverse ratio—for men sacrifice their lives full as often to superstition as to truth. Does the martyrdom of myriads of Hindoos prove their superstitions to be truths ?

Tradition is, at the best, but a method of approach to the truth of past events, but is by no means infallible, for the human mind can err.

All the testimony of the earth would not justify a belief in a wonder to which we can see nothing analogous.

Man acquires a reasonable conception of the Divine Being—supreme cause of all things—from a

contemplation of nature : it is from a contemplation of sensible effects that we conclude an invisible cause to be necessary ; but, to pretend to understand this supernatural cause, or the ways and manner of the Divinity, would be to pretend to be capable of rendering the incomprehensible, comprehensible.

It is to nothing less than this, however, that the historians of the New Testament pretend, when they attest the mortal possession of a knowledge of the supernatural manner by which an event was caused : for example, St. Matthew testifies, as to a fact, that Joseph had a knowledge of the supernatural cause or manner of the conception of Jesus.

The historian, who pretends to understand the supernatural manner of the Divinity, contradicts himself by attempting to invest his knowledge in an historical form, as such a supernatural account would be incomprehensible to man, or he who obtained such knowledge would be, "*de facto*," superhuman.

It is the belief in mystery which affects us, and not the attempted explanation of it.

From which do we gain a deeper conviction of the existence and greatness of God—from such attested accounts as Christ's having miraculously cleansed men possessed of the devil, and his having

changed water into wine—or from a personal contemplation of the growth of plants, or the revolutions of the planets?

The Evangelists have increased the previous existing collection of miracles—products of man's imagination—caused by an unseemly desire and accompanying impotence to penetrate into the domain of mystery, but they have thrown no new light upon the anterior mundane notions of the Divinity.

Still worse, they attest that the laws of nature were placed at the disposal of different men by the exercise of their will, and thus, by ascribing divine attributes to many, they no longer permit the Deity to remain a unit.

From a belief in all of the miracles related by the Evangelists, it is impossible to deduce a single law of moral action—the vital part of religion—except, perhaps, the negative deduction of the bad effects of such a belief.

Man derives less moral benefit from a belief in miracles than from a belief in fables—for fables sometimes have a moral.

If, in contradiction to our reasonable judgment, we should base our belief upon testimony alone, we would be forced, in consequence, to accept the attested superstition of all nations; we would, in a word, possess a conventional, self-annihilating belief.

In an appreciation of the value of testimony it is unjust to make an exception in favor of the Evangelists, for, by their contradictions, they themselves place the judgment of the reader above their testimony; besides, to believe men of other religions unendowed with the capacity of distinguishing and of transmitting truth, is to deny the experience of man and the justice of God.

The practice of justice and truth is as innate with man as his own nature, and justice has been practiced since the creation of the human mind.

Some argue that Adam was not brought into existence in the same way as other men; that there exists an analogy between him and Christ, which would tend to prove the belief in the miraculous conception of Christ by the Virgin to be not unreasonable.

This, however, is not the case.

The creation of the first of mankind is a mystery which we reflect upon with the same feelings as we do that of the creation of the world or the beginning of all things, and which only affects us because it appears to our minds to be a necessary and mysterious truth in the natural order of things; contrary to this, the supernatural conception of Christ by the Virgin Mary lies outside of the natural order of things.

To believe a thing because it is more incomprehensible than another thing is absurd ; because the one may be supernatural or wonderful, the other unnatural or miraculous.

Thus, we disbelieve the report, attested as true and believed to-day by millions, that Buddha stood several minutes in the air, or, again, that Mohammed (Mahomet) rode up to the throne of God, mounted on the winged Borak,\* because such feats would be unnatural, not because they are wonderful—for what more wonderful than the revolutions of the planets in space, or the colors of a flower, neither of which, however, are considered unnatural !

We are justified in a belief in the wonderful to the same degree that we have a reasonable conception of it ; this we gain through the medium of our senses from a contemplation of nature ; we believe, for instance, that an oak springs from an acorn ; but, if we consider upon the manner of the growth, we become engaged in the contemplation of a mystery, and, as such, we can form hereupon no positive belief, except a belief in mystery itself, which is alone comprehensible to God.

Everything serves as a medium of connection with mystery.

\* Koran, chap. 17.

A belief in the truth of testimony with regard to past events must be subjected to our analogical reason; thus we believe that our fathers were conceived in the same manner as ourselves; but, seeing nothing analogous in nature, we would not be justified in the belief in the miraculous conception of Christ, nor in the equally attested account of Balaam's ass being possessed of the faculty of speech.

It was this blind belief in testimony that Christ blamed when he accused the Pharisees of having made the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition.—St. Matthew, 15 : 6.

Our capacity has sufficient to cope with in the contemplation of the wonders in nature without accrediting unreasonable explanations of them.

The conception of every child is as wonderful as the attested miraculous conception of Jesus Christ; but this is unnatural, or more reasonably incredible.



# POSITIVE CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN THE EVANGELISTS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### GENEALOGY OF CHRIST.

THE Jews were awaiting a Messiah of the family of David ; it was probably to satisfy this expectation that St. Matthew commenced his gospel with the following enumeration of the descendants of David, as a genealogical proof of Christ's hereditary claim to the office of a Messiah.—St. Matthew 1 : 1-17.

1. Abraham,	Solomon,	Salathial,
2. Isaac,	Roboam,	Zorobabel,
3. Jacob,	Abia,	Abiud,
4. Judas,	Asa,	Eliakim,
5. Phares,	Josaphat,	Azor,
6. Esrom,	Joram,	Sadoc,
7. Aram,	Ozias,	Achim,
8. Aminadab,	Joatham,	Eliud,
9. Naason,	Achaz,	Eleazar,
10. Salmon,	Ezekias,	Matthan,
11. Booz,	Manasses,	Jacob,
12. Obed,	Amon,	Joseph,
13. Jesse,	Josias,	Christ.
14. David,	Jechonias,	

This genealogical list disagrees with equally authentic historical sources, also with the corresponding list adduced by St. Luke, besides which, the Evangelist most unhappily contradicts himself in the statement of the number of the members of one of his divisions.

In the first place, St. Matthew, ch. 1: 8, makes "Joram to be the father of Ozias," but according to the I. Chronicles, ch. 3: 11, 12, the descendants of Joram follow thus: "Joram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah\* or Ozias"; thus we find that the Evangelist has omitted here the three names of Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah.

Again, upon comparing v. 11 with I. Chronicles 15, 16, we find that between Josias and Jecho-nia, the name of Jehoiakim has been omitted.

The probable reason of the omission of these numbers was to maintain equal divisions of fourteen members. Herein the Evangelist may have been influenced by the prototypes afforded him in the second chapter of Genesis, where from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Abraham, there are respectively ten generations, and again from Abraham to Solomon, and from Solomon to Zedekia, there are respectively fifteen generations mentioned. From

\* The name of Azariah is the same as Uzziah or Greek Ozias, as stated distinctly in II. Chronicles, ch. 26: 1.

these prototypes St. Matthew may have deduced the conclusion, that the history of the Jews developed itself at equal periods; or, again, as 7, an exact subdivision of 14, has always been a holy number among the Jews, and as both the number 14 and the name of David are expressed by the same Hebrew characters, thus דוד=David, or numerically ד=4, ו=6, ר=4, total דוד=14; the Evangelist may have been induced herefrom to make that number enter an equal number of times into his genealogical list of Christ.

Secondly, The great difference between St. Matthew's book of the generations of Christ, and that of the only other Evangelist who furnished one, may be seen by comparing it with St. Luke 3 : 28-38.

1. David,	16. Er,	31. Nagge,
2. <i>Nathan</i> ,	17. Elmodam,	32. Esli,
3. Mattatha,	18. Cosam,	33. Naum,
4. Menan,	19. Addi,	34. Amos,
5. Melea,	20. Melchi,	35. Mattathias,
6. Eliakim,	21. <i>Neri</i> ,	36. Joseph,
7. Jonan,	22. Salathiel,	37. Janna,
8. Joseph,	23. Zorobabel,	38. Melchi,
9. Juda,	24. Rhesa,	39. Levi,
10. Simeon,	25. Joanna,	40. Matthat,
11. Levi,	26. Juda,	41. <i>Heli</i> ,
12. Matthat,	27. Joseph,	42. Joseph,
13. Jorim,	28. Semei,	43. Christ.
14. Eliezer,	29. Mattathias,	
15. Jose,	30. Maath,	

Here there are 42 members mentioned, commencing with David, while St. Matthew mentions only 26.

Here Neri is the grandfather of Zorobabel in the stead of Jechonia.

Again, Jechonia is made to descend from David's son Nathan, instead of Solomon.

From Zorobabel to Joseph, the father of Christ, St. Luke mentions 18 intermediate members, while St. Matthew enumerates only 9, and these entirely different from those of St. Luke.

Finally, St. Luke avers that Heli was the grandfather of Christ, which St. Matthew contradicts by designating Jacob.

Attempts have been made to harmonize the differences between these lists, by supposing one of them to be that of Mary, the mother of Christ; but this is in direct contradiction to the evangelistical statements, and is, consequently, based upon a worthless hypothesis.

In the last instance, St. Matthew contradicts his own statement as follows: v. 17, "So all the generations from Abraham to David are 14 generations, and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are 14 generations, and from the carrying away into Babylon until Christ are 14 generations."

That the evangelist has contracted his two first divisions we have already seen, the third one, how-

ever, is wanting in expansion, as it contains only 13 members.

St. John, whose point of view differs from that of the other Evangelists, gives no list of Christ's ancestors; but St. Mark remarks most naïvely that "Christ descended directly from God."

In a word, the disbelief in the genealogical lists of Christ dates as far back as St. Paul, who thus warns Timothy of them, I. Timothy 1: 4, "Neither give heed to fables nor endless genealogies which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith."

#### THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION.

This paragraph treats of the second inconsistent subject already contained in the first chapter of St. Matthew; inconsistent and incredible not only because it is opposed to reason, but for being in direct contradiction to the statements of the Evangelists themselves.

St. Matt. 1: 18. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."

This assertion of St. Matthew not only taxes our belief too much in his unparalleled minute historic-

al research, but it is also at variance with St. Paul's opinion of the same event, expressed in I. Romans, 1: 3, 4, "Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, but was son of God according to the Spirit."

Be this as it may, Saint Matthew—after having traced, with seeming great exactness, the genealogy of Christ through numerous ancestral members to its source in Abraham, which genealogy, although of recognized inexactness from the omissions and contradictions it contains, is nevertheless published as true, to persuade that Christ was of the seed of David—renders by this second account his previous genealogical list of total unimportance.

The great difficulty here consisted in deducing one and the same effect from two different causes; as true as this is impossible, so is it true, that Christ begot by the Holy Ghost did not possess one drop of the blood of David in his veins.

It belonged to the historical spirit of the Jews to regard every event which particularly affected them as a prophecied connecting link to their previous history.

So, here, Saint Matthew thinks to edify the Jews by the weight of an adduction of a passage from the prophets, in confirmation of his second deduction of the origin of Christ.

Ch. 1: 22. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

V. 23. "Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel."

The passage of Isaiah, quoted here isolatedly, must be considered in the connection in which it stands in the writings of that prophet.

Isaiah, 7: 1. "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, king of Judah, that Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it.

V. 10. "The Lord spake unto Ahaz, saying,

V. 11. "Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God ;

V. 12. "But Ahaz said I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.

V. 13. "And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David, It is a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also ?

V. 14. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign : Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.

V. 15. "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good."

V. 16. "For before the child shall know to refuse

the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings."

This event, which should have served King Ahaz as a sign to designate the moment when the two kings his enemies should depart from the territory of Judah, must necessarily have been a contemporaneous event to the life of that king, and cannot with any propriety be applied to the long posterior event of the birth of Christ.\*

\* The child of which Isaiah speaks in his accustomed prophetic tone was probably his own son, to whom he thus refers in the next following chapter.

Isaiah, 8 : 3. "And I went unto the prophetess and she conceived and bare a son."

The original text of verse 14 would be more correctly translated, if, instead of the phrase "A virgin shall conceive," there stood "A young woman shall conceive," because the word employed here is *עַלְמָה* (almah), while the word generally used to signify a "virgin" is *בְּתוּלָה* (betulah).

Many of the errors committed by Saint Matthew, in his frequent quotations of passages of the prophets, arise from an inconsiderate use of the incorrect Greek translation of the Septuagint, thus in the above he quotes :

"And *they* shall call his name Emmanuel," while in the original text it is "the maiden who is to call his name Emmanuel."

As regards this latter event, Saint Matthew informs us, ch. 1 : 25, that Joseph called the first born of Mary, Jesus.



## CHAPTER II.

### EVENTS ACCOMPANYING THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF CHRIST.

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#### THE STAR.

A STRONG predisposition to relate wonderful events is evident in St. Matthew's account in this chapter of the miraculous circumstances accompanying the birth of Christ.

The whole account stands in perfect harmony with the ancient astrological belief, that a star often made its first appearance at the birth of a great man.

Saint Matthew narrates :

Ch. 1 : 1. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem,

V. 2. "Saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him."

The aim of the Evangelist is merely to show that the star that appeared had reference to Christ : of the possibility of deducing such a reference he appears to have had no kind of doubt.

We must follow the account attentively, in order to gain as clear a view as possible of the manner in which the wise men, by an observation of the stars, succeeded in deducing the birth of a king of the Jews.

In the first instance, the divine revelation is exceedingly vague and circumscribed ; for the star, after having merely indicated the event, disappeared, leaving the wise men totally ignorant of the manner and locality in which to find the new-born king.

And now completely abandoned to their own instinct, they are obliged to have recourse to their natural faculties ; and being in possession of the principal secret, namely, that a king was born to the Jewish people, they determined to transport the theatre of their investigations to Jerusalem, as being, in all probability, the most approximate place to the sought-for locality.

Upon the receipt of the news all Jerusalem is dismayed, the chief priests are hastily convoked, and basing their decision upon a passage of the prophet Micah they designate Bethlehem as the proper birth-place of the new-born king.

Here we must pause an instant to consider the fitness of the application of this prophecy.

The passage made to refer to the birth-place of Christ is as follows, Micah 5 : 2 : " But thou,

Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."

This passage extracted from the prophet without regard to its connection with the rest of the chapter is here most inappropriately made use of to designate the birth-place of Christ.

To prove the truth of this assertion it is merely necessary to replace it in its original connection.

Micah prophecied during king Hiskia's reign, at a time when the position of Assyria towards the kingdoms of Israel and Juda was most menacing.

Shalmanezzer and Sennacherib (II. Kings, 18) had already made great incursions against them with different success, but doing much injury, so that the Jewish kingdoms already showed sure signs of soon falling a prey to Assyria.

Then it was that Micah prophecied a Messiah, and in speaking of him in the same chapter, he continues v. 6: "Thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh within our land, and when he treadeth within our borders."

We conclude that the Messiah, who was to deliver the kingdoms of Israel and Juda from the attacks of the Assyrian was not Jesus Christ.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to add that the great political ruler expected in the Messiah was not at

all realized in Christ who never was "the ruler of Israel."

The wise men continue their search, while St. Matthew soberly persists in attesting his belief in astrology, which ascribes to man the supernatural power of recognizing the exact relation of a star to terrestrial political events.

V. 9. "And, lo, the star which they saw in the East went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was."

This was, indeed, a favorable conjuncture if the star must reappear; this seems superfluous, however, now that the wise men had already ascertained in Jerusalem the desired information.

The following remarks though correct can serve at the most but as a negative elucidation of this miraculous star.

Certainly this star which "went before and then stood still over a house" was not governed by the same laws as other stars, among which the fixed stars do not enjoy the same visible facility of locomotion as the so-called moving stars.

Besides, to agree with St. Matthew is to recognize a great change in the law of optics since his time, for to-day it is impossible to recognize a particular object like a house as being exactly under a star.

The history of the star and the wise men is unknown to the other Evangelist. St. Luke, ch. 2 : 9, alone, narrates a succession of interesting events very similar to those which befell the wise men, but which he declares to have happened to some shepherds near Bethlehem : while watching their sheep by night.

We conclude from the whole of this story that St. Matthew, in common with his contemporaries, possessed a firm belief in the power of man to draw a horoscope, which constitutes one of the parts of astrology.

Newton, supposing the science of astronomy best calculated to unravel heavenly arcanae, undertook an astronomical explanation of the apocalypse, his attempt herein was unsuccessful ; this, however, in no wise discouraged a credulous sage from applying astronomy to biblical exegesis, namely in the pursuit of that wonderful star seen by the magi at the nativity.

The result of the calculation proved, at least to the mind of the mathematician, that the star of the wise man was neither more nor less than a comet observed by Chinese astronomers at about the epoch of the Christian era.

The likelihood of the wise men having been Chinese is also deduced from the account, ch. 2 :

16, which allows nearly two years to elapse from the moment of the appearance of the star to the arrival of the wise men in Jerusalem.

Nor are similar arguments unworthy of our learned theologians ; on the contrary, such subjects of investigation far surpass in importance the points of discussion of some of their spiritual forefathers, as may be seen from the following specimens ; thus a controversy was formerly sustained. "Whether Adam could possibly have had a navel." "What sort of ointment was used by Mary Magdalene to anoint Christ." "The quantity of wine consumed at the wedding feast at Cana." "If one drop of the blood of Christ sufficed to atone for the sins of the world." "Whether the angels of heaven dance minuets or waltzes." "Whether they have only tenor or sometimes bass-voices." "The probable mean thermometrical degree of heat in hell." To these may be added the doctrinal point concerning the immaculate conception of the Virgin, which has lately been decided upon in Rome by the Pope, to the great edification of all Christendom.\*

\* St. Augustin (*De civitate Dei*, Lib. xxi., cap. v.) ; Origines (*In libris adversus Celsum*) ; Lactantius (*Divin. Institut.*, Lib. iv., cap. xii., pages 246, 247) ; and other of the older writers and Fathers of the Church have endeavored to prove the immaculate

THE REASON GOLD AND FRANKINCENSE WERE PRESENTED  
TO CHRIST.

The events prophecied by the prophets to accompany the Messiah were often attested by the Evangelists as having befallen Christ. For instance Isaiah prophecied, ch. 60 : 6, "All they from Sheba shall come, they shall bring gold and incense ; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord." Now, as with the evangelists the Lord is synonymous with Jesus Christ, St. Luke 2 : 11, the following statement is not at all surprising: "St. Matthew 2 : 11, And when they (the wise men, i. e. all they from Sheba !) had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

THE FLIGHT OF THE HOLY FAMILY INTO EGYPT.

Ch. 2 : v. 13. "And when they, the wise men, had departed, behold the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the

virginity of the mother of Christ, from the example of certain animals which they believed were rendered fecund by the wind.

"Quod si animalia quedam vento aut aurâ concipere solere omnibus notum est, cur quis quam mirum putet cum spiritu Dei cui facile est quidquid velit, gravatam esse Virginem dicimus."



young child and his mother and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

V. 14. "When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:"

V. 15. "And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, '*Out of Egypt have I called my son.*'"

This quotation is made from Hosea, ch. 11, v. 1. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." St. Matthew has very considerably omitted the first half of this sentence, "When Israel was a child," as inapplicable to Christ, and then with glowing eagerness quotes the last half, "Out of Egypt have I called my son," as though this formed in itself an independent phrase referring to Christ.

The prophet Hosea, who wrote during the reign of Hiskia, at a time when the Jewish kingdom were menaced with a complete overthrow by the Assyrians, refers in the above passage to the early history of the Israelites, where at first being called out of Egypt they seemed particularly beloved of God as a contrast to their present seemingly abandoned state.



Saint Matthew's application of this dismembered sentence is absurd, indeed the quotation of a more appropriate passage would be useless here, as the event of the flight itself is rendered impossible by Saint Luke's testimony.

This Evangelist, who knows nothing of Christ's journey into Egypt, furnishes us with an interesting, but entirely different historical notice of that early period of Christ's life, as follows :

Saint Luke, ch. 2 : 21. " And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus."

V. 22. " And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord."

Vs. 39. " And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee to their own city Nazareth."

Regardless of the safety of the child, if, indeed, as St. Matthew says, Herod sought to kill him, Jesus is here carried to Jerusalem immediately after the purification of Mary, which was thirty-three days after the circumcising of her son (Leviticus 12 : 4).

Then the Holy Family returned from Jerusalem

directly to their house in Nazareth, thus rendering their journey to Egypt an impossibility.

THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS.

Ch. 2, v. 16. "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceedingly wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethelhem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men."

It seems improbable that a Roman governor should have dared to sacrifice so many children to his blind rage, when the law offered the greatest protection to the people, as we see in the case of Saint Paul, who, having made an appeal to the emperor, is forcibly sent to Rome to be judged.

It also appears contradictory, that no allusion is made thereto by Saint Luke; for, although it is certain that there exists no actual contradiction, when one author makes no mention of an event related by another, yet in particular relations, such as existed between Saint Matthew and Saint Luke, both undertaking to state the same events, the case is different, especially so, when we consider the assertion made by Saint Luke, ch. 1 : 3, "that he

had perfect knowledge of all things concerning Christ from the very first," and undertakes to make a certain Theophilus acquainted with all of those things which he himself believed. In this case, Saint Luke's negative testimony appears to possess as much weight as Saint Matthew's affirmation.

Disregarding these reasonable probabilities, the only advantage gained by this terrible massacre is the assertion of the accomplishment of another prophecy, thus v. 17. "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying: v. 18: "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not."

If it depended only on the evidence of the misapplication of this passage of the prophet, to prove the falsity of the evangelical statement, history might be easily cleansed of this superfluity. The passage adduced is taken from Jeremiah 31:15. "Thus saith the Lord, a voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel weeping for her children; refused to be comforted, because they were not." This poetical sublime passage refers to the captives led away to Babylon; their way passed through Rama, a town situated in the territory belonging to the race of Benjamin, the

mother of which race was Rachel ; for which reason she is here poetically made to lament them as her own children.

That the prophet Jeremiah was referring to the captive Israelites is again fully demonstrated in the next following : verse 16 : “ Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, and *they shall come back again* from the land of the enemy.”

Does this refer to the captives led away to Babylon, or are the murdered innocents to come back again from the land of the enemy ?

The story of the massacre of the innocents is better understood, when we consider that a similar slaughter was commanded by the Pharaoh of Egypt, in the time of Moses, between whom and Elijah and the Messiah a great analogy was expected to exist.

#### RETURN OF THE HOLY FAMILY FROM EGYPT.

When Herod was dead, Joseph took Mary and Jesus, and returned into the land of Israel.

V. 22. “ But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither ; notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee.”

V. 23. "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets: *He shall be called a Nazarene.*"

Here Joseph, influenced by a dream, turns aside to dwell in Nazareth, merely to fulfill a prophecy.

Contradictorily to this, St. Luke, who, as we have seen, has no knowledge of the journey to Egypt, informs us that Joseph and family, in going to Nazareth, were returning *to their own city*.

Certainly, if St. Luke's account be credible, Joseph possessed sufficient natural instinct to return home, thus fulfilling St. Matthew's prophecy without the necessity of a supernatural intimation.

The term "St. Matthew's prophecy" is applied here to the passage, "*He shall be called a Nazarene,*" because no similar passage exists in the prophetic writings. The nearest approximation that can be made to the above phrase, is produced by torturing the original sense of a sentence, and by making a play of words.

Thus it is supposed that the passage to which St. Matthew intended to refer is Isaiah, ch. 11, 1: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots."

A general reader would be at a loss here to recognize the analogy between this passage and Saint Matthew's quotation ; " He shall be called a Nazarene." However, from a contemplation of the changes effected, this metamorphosis becomes quite recognizable.

Firstly, נָזִיר nezer in Hebrew signifies both a Nazarene and a branch ; by accepting the first signification, one can translate, " And a Nazarene shall grow out of his roots." And now by an effort of the imagination, this sentence can be successively construed, " he shall be called a Nazarene," or still better, " The Messiah, or Jesus Christ, shall be called a Nazarene."

This extraordinarily broad interpretation demonstrates the great facility possessed by the Evangelists in transforming a passage of the prophets into a prophecy of the events he himself relates.

From all of the above accounts we conclude that the Evangelists possessed, at the best, but a slight cognizance of the events affecting the infancy of Christ, or otherwise have conspired to transmit them so discordantly that their entire credence is unauthorized.

## CHAPTER III.

OF JOHN THE BAPTIST FORETOLD BY ISAIAH.

V. I. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

V. 2. "And saying, Repent ye : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

V. 3. "For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

In the original text in Isaiah ch. 40 : 3, from which this passage is quoted the sentence stands thus : קול קורא בַּמִּדְבָּר (kol kora ba midbar), "a voice calls in the wilderness."

Already the Septuagint wrongly connected the words ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ (in the desert) with φωνὴ βοῶντος (the voice of one crying), instead of the verb ἐτοιμάσατε (prepare).

The translation of Isaiah 40 : 3 should be read thus : "A voice calls ; in the wilderness, Prepare ye

the way of the Lord ; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

The same expression is repeated in verse sixth : "A voice said, Cry ; and he said what shall I cry."

The voice in both cases is that of the prophet, but is referred to objectively here as the inner voice, or voice of God.

The passage quoted forms a part of a consoling discourse to the Jews at the end of their exile, and Isaiah here refers to the return of the God of the Jewish theocracy by the way of the desert.

The English translators studiously render the original passage equal to St. Matthew's quotation, as follows :

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness."

But in v. 6 of the same chapter, being no longer indirectly obliged to recognize a prophetical passage, they translate very correctly : v. 6. "A voice said," etc.

One more effort and this passage can be made to refer directly to John the Baptist, and this effort is made by Martin Luther who translates,

"Es ist die Stimme eines Predigers."

(It is the voice of a preacher.)

Harmonists would consider this to be a translation



made in the proper spirit, but we shall leave it without remark.

JOHN THE BAPTIST FORETOLD BY THE PROPHET MALACHI.

The Jews were expecting a preacher of repentance to precede the coming of their Messiah : this preacher would be Elijah resuscitated, as taught by the prophet Malachi, 4 : 5 : " Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

So John the Baptist, like Elijah, taught the doctrine of repentance ; and as Elijah by Jesabel (I. Kings 19 : 2), so John is pursued by Herodias.

The only obstacle to the acceptation of the accomplishment of this prophecy is the simple fact that John the Baptist was not the incarnate Elijah.

OF JOHN THE BAPTIST'S CLOTHING AND FOOD.

John must necessarily be made to wear a camel's hair dress, because this was the ordinary costume of the prophets (II. Kings 1 : 8 ; Zach. 13 : 4).

He ate wild honey, because honey was believed to render the sight more clear, and was considered by antiquity as a proper symbol of foresight, or divination and eloquence.

So the Prophetess of Delphi was surnamed "the Bee." To the Hebrew, it denoted "clever speech"—Proverbs 5: 3—and was exceptionally considered a clear insect. Levit. 11: 2.

The locust was the symbol of a divine doctrine; thus, the Hindoo believes that the god Shiva, in the form of a locust, spoke the creating word. Also the Latin noun "locusta" is derived from "loqui," to speak.

#### THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

V. 16. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him."

V. 17. "And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

This is about synonymous with St. Mark 1: 11: "Thou art my beloved son in whom I am well pleased;" and with St. Luke 3: 22: "Thou art my beloved son, in thee I am well pleased;" but according to St. John, the voice said, ch. 1: 33: "Upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending and remaining upon him the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

These different accounts leave a strange effect upon the mind.

The Evangelists make voices talk from the clouds in such a familiar manner, and take so little care to translate the conversation either correctly or entirely.

Perhaps the heavenly voice heard by John the Baptist was that of his conscience, which is the most divine of any voice comprehended by mortals. St. Luke, who, in treating the miraculous, rarely fails to furnish a most abundant testimony, expresses his zeal, on this occasion, by bestowing a body on what is used by the other Evangelists as a metaphor of innocence, truth, and purity: thus—St. Luke, 3: 22—“And the Holy Ghost descended in a *bodily* shape, like a dove, upon him.\*

\* It is narrated in Gen. 1: 2, that “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters;” and in speaking of this, the Talmud adds, “like unto a dove.”

Again, as a dove with an olive branch appeared unto Noah after the deluge, as a sign of the accomplishment of the purification of the earth, and of the pacification of nature; so at the baptism, symbolical of spiritual purification or regeneration, a dove must appear. Symbol of the being engendered of humidity, doves drew the chariot of the goddess of love, born of the sea. The noun “dove,” in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, is derived from verbs which signify to engender, to sail, to swim. Lat., *columba*, from *κολυβάω*, to swim; Greek, *πέλεια*, from *πλέω*, to sail; Hebrew, *יונה* (*ionah*) from *ענה* to engender. We may add that the

## OF BAPTISM.

The baptism conferred by John the Baptist was bound together with a repentance of past sins, and the intention to lead a more pure and moral life—and was it not received as such by Christ?

The belief that baptism is of primary importance, and absolutely necessary for sure happiness here or hereafter, is based upon chapter 16 of St. Mark.

V. 16. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

If Christ had intended to confer the idea of the absolute necessity of baptism, he would certainly have stated distinctly that "he that is not baptized shall be damned."

But this is contrary to the whole spirit of Christ's doctrine. Christ never baptized. Our happiness, here or hereafter, in no wise depends upon such external action. Belief is what Christ taught; faith in his doctrine and moral teachings, which judged man no longer from his actions alone, but placed the tribunal of that judgment in his conscience.

noun "knee" is derived from the same root as the verb "to engender." Thus we have French, *genou*; Latin, *genu*; Greek, *γονή*; Hebrew, *גִּנְיָה*, all of which are analogous to the Sanscrit (*yoni*)—*partes mulieris secretæ*.

Matth. 5: 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

St. Matthew 5: 8. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

V. 9. "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

V. 10. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

There is no clause here stipulating that the pure in spirit and the pure in heart, in order to be saved, must first be baptized. Baptism was the ceremony employed by the apostles upon the reception of a new member or follower of Christ, and was the symbol of a spiritual purification in so far as was caused by a sincere repentance of past sins, and a pure intent for the future.

The term, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, signifies to be in duty bound to recognize in God the kind Father of mankind; Christ, as the brother of all men (St. Matt. 12: 50), and the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit to be that higher part of man's nature through which he feels persuaded of his intimate connection with God. But soon the ordinary expressions employed in baptism were converted into a miraculous magic formula.

And now arose the impious and bigoted belief that the millions of unbaptized would suffer eternal damnation. This is supposing them to have been created by the all-just God merely to serve as food for the flames of hell.

This doctrine, consequently developed, has led the Roman Catholic Church, since St. Augustine's time, to baptize even unborn babes !

Most nations of antiquity believed that a lustration of the body caused or was the symbol of a corresponding spiritual purification.

The holy Brahmin has always practiced the ceremony of sprinkling water on his head and upon the earth to drive off the evil spirits. Then he prays thus : " As the bather becomes clean from all dirt, so may this water cleanse me. O, water ! thou art an immortal fluid."

The Egyptian believed that the water of the Nile possessed expiatory powers, and holy water was to be found in all their temples (Juvenal 6 : 382). The same was believed, with regard to their holy water, by the Parsee and the Persian.

Of the power of the holy waters of the Ganges, every one is familiar.

Baptism was the symbol of regeneration. Juno bathed in the Parthenion well and became again a virgin.

The Jews had a holy water which served as "purification for sin" (Numb. 19: 9). According to the Talmud, "If a heathen woman received into Judaism were with child, the baptism of the mother sufficed for the child" (Jebamoth, fol. 78a).

To-day, in the Roman Catholic Church, every child baptized is first exorcised by the priest, who breathes on him three times: then the holy salt used on the occasion is purified, by exorcism, from the malignant influences of the devil, and it is again by exorcism that Satan is charged never to violate the sacred sign of the cross, impressed on the forehead of the child.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE THREE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST BY THE DEVIL.

CHRIST is here made to undergo three successive uncouth temptations.

There is made to occur nothing more or less than a combat “in persona” between Satan—evil personified—and Christ, the Son of God—or absolute good. Yet since ages the superiority of good over evil had been established—according to history ever since St. Michael’s time. This is the renewal of the old combat between the good and evil spirits—the personified combat of Ormuzd and Ahriman of the Persians, of Vischnou and Schiva of the Hindoos.

The preliminaries to the first temptation are narrated as follows :

V. 1. “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

V. 2. “And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.”

Christ has just been represented as a being “full of a Godlike spirit,” which he had received at his



baptism. Again, St. Luke 4 : 1 : " He is full of the Holy Ghost." Besides, St. Matt. 4 : 6 : " He is the Son of God." As such, and shielded by such force, is it not presumptuous to affirm beforehand that all the attacks of the devil will be received with unimpressible firmness?

That it is immoral to seek temptation, is a principle universally recognized among Christians, in their prayer " lead us not into temptation." Thus Christ could impossibly have sought this temptation voluntarily, and, consequently, the Spirit which led him to be tempted was a superior power, which reduced him to act the rôle of an involuntary agent.

Either by chance, or purposely, to increase the merit of Christ, he is stated, immediately previous to his temptation, to have fasted forty days and forty nights, in which state, if, indeed, it were possible, he must succumb; and it is naïvely added, that " afterwards he was much an hungered."

If Jesus was merely a man he would have been more than an hungered; if more than a man there was no need of his being made to hunger.

A striking prototype of this long fast happened while Moses was on Mount Sinai :

Exodus 34 : 28. " And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread nor drink water."

Again :

I. Kings 19 : 8. " And he (Elijah) arose, and did eat and drink, and went on the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God."

Forty was a penance number among the Jews ; so, at the deluge, it rained forty days and forty nights.

After the spies had returned from their forty days' mission, the Israelites were condemned, for their unbelief, to remain forty years in the desert. As a punishment, they remained forty years under the yoke of the Philistines (Judges 13 : 1). In forty days Nineveh would be destroyed (Jonah 3 : 4) ; and the land of the Egyptians he laid waste during forty years. Eli was judge, and Saul, David, and Solomon reigned forty years each, etc., etc., etc. Here commences the account of the first temptation.

V. 3. "And when the tempter came to him, he he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

V. 4. " But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Thus, in his first temptation, Satan is repulsed by a quotation of part of the 3d verse of the 8th chapter

of Deuteronomy, where, in speaking of God's treatment of the Israelites, Moses says :

V. 3. "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know ; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

If we accept this account literally, we ask what Satan's object was, and what moral or important conclusion *we* can deduce herefrom. Did Satan wish Christ to acknowledge to him that he was really the Son of God ? But Satan's question, v. 3, "If thou be the Son of God," and his final obeyal to a simple command, without Christ's having performed a single miracle demanded of him, prove conclusively that Satan knew Christ from the beginning.

Again, that Christ should have allowed himself to be thus tempted is surprising ; for he must have recognized Satan from the beginning. "He who knew man's thoughts" (St. Mat. 12 : 25) must have recognized the devil.

Between the first question and reply there is only a verbal accommodation.

As, from a literal acceptation of this account, the question asked by Satan was virtually answered

beforehand, and is substantially without an aim, this account can only be considered as a curious combination of quotations pleasing to the Jewish mind. The manner of the whole combat between Satan and Christ, carried on by reciprocal quotations from the Old Testament, was by no means original with St. Matthew, as similar combats are narrated in the Talmud, as for instance, between Satan and Abraham (Sanhedrim, fol. 89, col. 2).

#### SECOND TEMPTATION.

In his second attack, Satan appears at first to have the advantage, when he seizes Christ, and supernaturally transporting him through the air, he places him on the top of a pinnacle!

V. 5. "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.

V. 6: "And saith unto him, If thou be the son of God cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

V. 7. "Jesus said unto him, it is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

It must not be supposed that Satan's quotation

from Psalm 91 : 11, 12 refers to Christ alone ; for God made no such promise to him, even the English translators of the Bible recognize that this Psalm refers to “ the state of the godly.”

The second answer of Christ is quoted from a chapter of Deuteronomy, which treats of the duty of the Israelites toward Jehovah. Thus Deut. 6 : 16, “ Ye (sons of Israel) shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.”

The latter part of the phrase was very properly omitted in the quotation, as inappropriate.

#### THIRD TEMPTATION.

V. 8. “ Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

V. 9. “ And he saith unto him, All these things will I give unto thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

V. 10. “ Then said Jesus unto him, Get thee hence Satan ; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

V. 11. “ Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”

It is in vain that we search to-day for even feeble

remains of that exceeding high mountain from which "all the kingdoms of the world could be seen."

There is a mountain in the neighborhood of Jericho, which to-day is pointed out to travelers as the one on which Christ performed his long fast. They told us there, that zealous bigots try to rival Christ by performing a similar feat; that some died in the attempt, while others, much better Christians, came down to get something to eat.

According to St. Matthew, as we have seen, Satan leaves Christ on a mountain; but according to St. Luke 4: 9, "Christ is left on a pinnacle," nor is there any mention made here of the angels which came and ministered unto him, in the same way that angels came and ministered unto Elijah on the occasion of his long fast of forty days and forty nights (I Kings 19: 5).

The lively exclamation of the Evangelist: "Behold! angels came," etc., which would make it appear as if he were present on the occasion, shows the spirit in which this account is written.

This temptation was evidently motived by certain sentences of the Old Testament, and ascribed to the Lord God: while here, under different conditions, they are ascribed to Christ, who is also called the Lord.

Most every nation of importance has practiced fasting. Severe fasting must be injurious to the health, and cannot, therefore, be acceptable to God.

If we consider the long fast ascribed to Christ from a general historical point of view, we find that far from being an extraordinary isolated occurrence, its practice was in harmony with the nearly universal belief of his time. Fasting is one of the many sorts of offerings believed to be propitiatory. To elevate one's self above matter, to control the passions, was, perhaps, the primitive object of the offering of fasting. The renouncement of the pleasures of the senses is a step towards the spiritual—a blow to the material. Chastity is an offering, but its practice does not destroy desire, fasting was resorted to to kill the passions. The Bramin, unlike the Christian, does not keep an account with God; for example, many Christians fast and do penance to wipe out past sins—the Bramin does not fast to balance any special sins he may have committed, but to weaken his material nature that the divine spark alone may remain.

He believes the greater the penance, the holier the man—the more he overcomes his sensual desires and regard for material things, the more closely he is allied to his pantheistical god.

The holy Bramin endeavors to reduce his material individuality, so as to form a more integral part of the whole in nature.

The Buddhist considers being, either as a whole or individually, as a misfortune, and regards fasting as one of the many means used to eliminate self-consciousness, and to arrive at that happy state of complete extinction called Nirvâna (Bournouf, *Introd. à l'Hist. du Bouddhism, Ind.*, p. 589).

Severe fasting was found to exist among the ancient Mexicans, and in a milder form among the Peruvians (Garc. 6, col. 20).

Fasting was practiced among all those nations to an extent that their precedence over Christians is guaranteed, if self-torture be the measure of virtue.

Among the Chinese, this sort of offering is unknown, as their religion and philosophy teach that "whatever is, is right." Man's nature is reasonable ; if he perverts it by transgressing the eternal laws, he must endeavor to purify it by becoming like a little child. The great philosopher said : "I have passed entire days without nourishment, and entire nights without sleep, to give myself up to meditation, and that without any real utility : study is much preferable" (Lun-yu, chap. 15, 30).

Again, the old Parsee or Zend religion did not permit fasting. "If man eats nothing he is with-



out strength, and is not able to perform pure works. There will be neither strong laborers nor robust children, if there is a want of food. The world, as it exists, lives by nourishment" (Zend-Avesta, vendidad, vol. ii. p. 284).

Among the Israelites, the abstaining from certain aliments during the feast of the passover was prescribed by the following law :

"Whoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel."

Besides, the Jews fasted in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth month of their year (Zach. 8 : 19).

The Pharisees, Essenians, and Therapeutans perpetuated the offering of fasting among the Jews.

Fasting may have been considered as a mere holy preparation by some of the early Christians, but it was also considered as a penance.

The quadregesimal or forty days' fast was regarded as derived from the long fast of Moses, or as a tenth of time given to God.

In early times, exceedingly severe fasting was practiced. Nothing but bread was eaten, and that at a late hour of the day. This usage gradually assumed a milder form, and was at length converted into an object of speculation, as the spiritual benefits of fasting can be purchased in the R. C. church.

To-day, the Greek church recognizes more fasts than the Latin.

It is among Asiatic Christians that fasting is the most strictly observed, and in fact with the Maronites, Syrians, and Armenians fasting is so highly esteemed, that the greater part of the year is composed of fast days.

It is very wearisome to reflect upon such stories as these ; but it is still more so to see in other respects capable persons maintain a verbal belief therein.

This arises in a great measure from ignorance, and an undetermined early education in which the study of the scriptures is so bound together with our affection for those who taught us, that we mingle indiscriminately the teachings of these things with our most tender remembrances, thus rendering most difficult every change in the souvenirs of our childhood. If our fathers had studiously endeavored to attach such stories as these to the great principles of Christianity, and render an account of the edification they had derived therefrom, they would, we believe, have found it a most difficult task to perform.

#### THE CASTING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST INTO PRISON.

By comparing this event, as narrated by St. Matthew and St. John, with a second event (the journey

of Christ into Galilee), we find great discordance in the time.

Thus, St. Matthew 4 : 12, "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee." As a subsequent event which marks the time of this first journey into Galilee, Jesus is made, ch. 4 : 18-21, "to choose, while there, four of his disciples, Peter, Andrew, James and John." Contrary to this, St. John informs us, ch. 1 : 40, 41, "That the disciples Peter and Andrew were chosen before Christ went into Galilee," and he completes the contradiction by saying, some time after the election of those disciples, ch. 3 : 24, that "John the Baptist was not yet cast into prison."

#### CHRIST'S JOURNEY INTO GALILEE.

V. 12. "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee.

V. 13. "And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim.

V. 14. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias, the Prophet, saying,

V. 15. "The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles :

V. 16. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

St. Matthew has made here a partial, incorrect, and isolated quotation from this passage of Isaiah, ch. 9: 1. "Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

V. 2. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

In his quotation, St. Matthew supposes Christ the great spiritual light to have been foretold by Isaiah; but, in the prophet, every verb referring to that light is in the past tense.

Isaiah the prophet wrote under King Jotham (Isaiah 1: 1) who reigned in Jerusalem; while Pekah, king of Israel, governed in Samaria (II. Kings 15: 32).

We learn also, (in II. Kings, 15: 29), that "In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, came Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, and took Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria."

To these cotemporaneous events it is, no doubt, that Isaiah refers, ch. 9: 1, in speaking of the affliction undergone by the people of the land of Zebulun, Naphthali, and Galilee.

Whether he refers to their freedom from bondage or not, it is certain that he refers to events already past, and which must necessarily have taken place long before Christ.

## CHAPTER V.

### CHRIST'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

THIS, together with the two following chapters, contains the discourse commonly known as the "Sermon on the Mount;" not very properly so called, however, as from a parallel examination of St. Matthew and St. Luke, the precise locality of this event remains undetermined. Thus, St. Matthew, 5: 1: "And seeing the multitude, he *went up into a mountain*, and when he was set," etc. Referring to the locality where this discourse was held, St. Luke says, ch. 6: "And he *came down* with them, and stood in *the plain*."

These life-like descriptions, which portray the exact position of Christ, would seem to attest the actual presence of the narrator, or at least to contain the exactness of inspiration—if they did not contradict each other.

If the same latitude of expression were allowed to two historians transmitting the ten commandments, the result would be disastrous.

As many figurative accounts of the Old Testament have served the Evangelists as bases of some specific action ascribed to Christ, so, also, in his moral doctrine, we find that many sentences of the Old Testament have been made use of, and often verbally.

In our parallel between the moral doctrine of Christ, and that existing before his time, we shall only refer to the Old Testament, and to those books alone which are received as canonical; for if we should take the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament and the Jewish writings into consideration, there is not a moral sentence ascribed to Christ which could not be found in some one of them.

The following are some of the principal parallels:

St. Mat. v. 3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Prov. 15: 33, "Before honor is humility.

Prov. 16: 5, "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord."

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St. Mat. 5: 4, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Ps. 149: 3, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

St. Mat. 5 : 5, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Ps. 149 : 6, "The Lord lifteth up the meek."

Ps. 37 : 11, "The meek shall inherit the earth."

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St. Mat. 5 : 6, "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Isaiah 58 : 10, "And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul ; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day.

V. 11, "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones."

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St. Mat. 5 : 8, "Blessed are the poor in heart, for they shall see God."

Ps. 24 : 3, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord ? or who shall stand in his holy place ?

V. 4, "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart."

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St. Mat. 5 : 38, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.



V. 39, "But I say unto you that ye remit not evil."

Prov. 20 : 22, "Say not thou, I will recompense evil."

Prov. 24 : 29, "Say not I will do so to him as he hath done to me."

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St. Mat. 22 : 37, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

Deut. 6 : 5, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

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St. Mat. 22 : 39, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Levit. 19 : 18, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

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We deduce from these parallels that the moral principles ascribed to Christ may have been taught by him, but did not originate with him.

In the time of Christ, the Jews no longer followed the spirit but the letter of the law. It was not so much against their external actions, as against the spirit that dictated them, that Christ combated.

For example, compare the conflicting doctrines

of Christ and the Jews with regard to the observance of the Sabbath, prayer, fasting, etc.

With regard to the Sabbath, the Jews held it in superstitious respect, and taught that on this day it was wicked to walk beyond a prescribed and limited distance (Exod. 16 : 29) ; in opposition to this Christ taught, St. Matthew 12 : 8, "That the son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day," and that, v. 12, "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days."

Of swearing, Christ says :

St. Mat. 5 : 34, 35, "Swear not at all, neither by the heaven, the earth, nor by Jerusalem."

The Jews were in the habit of swearing by Jerusalem or their head, and then of breaking such oaths, under the pretense that as they did not contain the name of God they were not binding (St. Mat. 23 : 16-21).

It must have been such faithless practices as these that Christ condemned, for there is nothing bad in calling upon God, as the all-knowing, to witness the truth of an assertion.

When the High Priest adjured Christ by the ever-living God, Christ made a reply, and thus took an oath in the manner common in his day (*vide* St. Mat. 26 : 63).

So, again, St. Paul, I. Romans 1 : 9, calls God to witness his veracity, and thus takes an oath.

Concerning prayer, the Jews formerly, like the Mohammedans of to-day, prayed in whatsoever place they found themselves at the fixed hour of prayer.

Christ taught: St. Mat. 6 : 6, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet.

V. 7, "And when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do ; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking."

This modest prescription was a salutary lesson for the hypocrisy of the Jews, and is one of those standard sayings which has not lost its application even in our days.

Christ by no means held all the principles of the Jews as infallible, as we see in ch. 5 : 21, 22, 27, 28, 33, 34, 43, 44.

Christ accepted those laws of Moses as divine which tended to confirm man in practices conformable with nature and order ; but he never based a belief in moral principles upon tradition or miracles.

Christ could not have accepted the laws of Moses as divine merely because Jewish history surrounded their origin with miraculous events.

For as surely as a divine law remains divine, so certainly would he have been obliged to observe the law which forbids the use of wine as food ; for, Leviticus 11 : 7, "This law was given by *a direct command of God.*" But Christ taught that not that

which goeth into the mouth defileth a man (St. Matt. 15:11).

The ten commandments did not spring suddenly into existence on Mt. Sinai, but were necessarily established to enforce order in the first state of society.

That they existed long before the time of Moses, is best attested in the book of Genesis.

Did not God bless the Sabbath at the creation?

Was not murder condemned in Cain?

Was not Canaan condemned because Ham did not honor his father Noah?

Was not adultery condemned in Abimelech—threatened with death for taking the wife of Abraham?

Is it reasonable to believe in moral law as divine because historians attest miracles to have accompanied their presentation to mankind? Would not this transfer our belief in those laws to the credibility of the historian?

If miracles were necessary to make mankind receive the purely moral laws of Moses, they would be necessary on every subsequent occasion of their reception.

There is nothing in an attested miraculous event which we can feel, act upon, or imitate.

We accept a moral principle, such as "Love thy

neighbor as thyself," as divine or normal with the law of justice, because it contains a self-evident truth, which we can prove by its application to our own nature, without the slightest regard to the credibility of the historian.

Does a child or a heathen, in performing a moral action, first recall to mind a moral of Moses or of Christ?

Christ did not create virtue or vice. Virtue and vice have had, for natural effect, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, since the beginning.

The human mind, at its creation, was composed of certain faculties capable of the same action as to-day—a similar movement causing a similar result.

The law of cause and effect is immutable—a similar cause always having had a similar effect; thus, a humorous or serious account of antiquity has the same effect upon us as upon the cotemporaries of the writer; that is, the part purely serious or comic, and not depending for appreciation upon a presupposed particular knowledge or belief.

The Jews in general measured morality by external action; Christ endeavored to base it upon the inner, invisible domain of thought—making man morally responsible for nourishing impure thoughts.

Christ made this natural sentiment of order and truth the basis of religion, or of faith in truth.

The greatness and superiority of Christ consisted in his simplicity.

The power of laying down and acting upon incontrovertible moral principles is the most simple, most difficult, and greatest action of which man's mind is capable.

The most difficult, because necessitating the most complete divestment of external influencing causes.

The most simple, because the most innate; it remaining to genius alone to express a sentiment or thought so simply as to make it appear of our own creation.

The greatest, because affecting all men beneficially.

Christ taught nothing more divine than truthful principles, which, like flames, are all similar—those taught before Christ, by Christ, and since Christ's time.

True religion is based upon man's intelligence and sentiment of truth: that which affects neither of these faculties is a conventional belief.

In a word, it overthrows all local barriers and introduces universality, teaching individuals and nations that every part of humanity affects the rest, and that true progress is alone made when all parts continue to hold their relative progressive position.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CHRIST STILLETH THE TEMPEST.

THE evangelist gives the following description of Christ's calming the sea :

S : 23. "And when he was entered into a ship his disciples followed him.

V. 24. "And behold there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves ; but he was asleep.

V. 25. "And his disciples came to him and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us : we perish.

V. 26. "And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O, ye of little faith ? Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea ; and there was a great calm.

Compare with this whole story the poetical description of the Psalmist :

Ps. 107 : 23. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters

V. 24. "These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.

V. 25. "For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

V. 26. "They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.

V. 27. "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

V. 28. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

V. 29. "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

V. 30. "Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

Is not this another of those numerous cases in which the evangelist has converted a beautiful poetical description by the Psalmist of the all-pow-erfulness of the Lord into an historical fact relating to Christ?

The argument used on this and other similar occasions was simply this: The Lord maketh the storm a calm, Jesus Christ is the Lord, consequently Christ calmed a storm at sea!

Liberal deductions of this kind are often made by the Evangelists, which we shall point out in their proper connection.

While the descriptions of the Old Testament are



brilliant and full of nerve, the Evangelist retails dull accounts of unlikely events, fashioned out of the ideas and words of those older writings.

For instance, was it not natural that the disciples should have been fearful in such a storm? and is it not unlikely that men who had seen their master perform so many miracles, should have cried out, v. 27, "What manner of man is this?"

CHRIST DRIVETH THE DEVILS OUT OF GERGESENES.

V. 28. "And when he was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

V. 29. "And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

V. 30. "And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

V. 31. "So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

V. 32. "And he saith unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd

of swine : and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters."

As, in the present mathematical age, there are many persons who, being unfamiliar with figurative modes of expression common to eastern writers, overlook the fact that a moral can be drawn from a figure, and erroneously suppose a literal reception of the evangelistical accounts to be synonymous with religion, we shall for this reason attentively consider the present account, and expose with exactness the remarkable belief that its verbal acceptance would entail.

Admitting the personality of devils, we have here some most heterogeneous personages, possessing the power of foresight, and versed in the divine doctrine ; for they recognize Christ on his approach as the Son of God, and by the question, " Art thou come hither to torment us before our time ?" they betray their knowledge of the doctrine of the last judgment ; besides, this question implies that the evil ones have also their rights, and that, until the day of judgment, they expected to live in peace, for they are exceedingly surprised at being disturbed.

Upon seeing Christ, these mixed beings were so terrified, that the devils who were temporarily residing in these Gergesenes or (St. Luke, 8 : 26)

Gadarenes, beg to leave their human victims and to enter into the bodies of about 2,000 hogs (Mark, 5 : 13), who were feeding on the mountain-side opposite. At the command of Christ, the devils vanish.

And now they enter into a herd of swine, who, unlike the Gergesenes, find them intolerable, and soon discomforted, furious and reckless, they gallop down the steep mountain-side, and throw themselves headlong into the sea, where they are choked.

Of the two naked men, the legion of devils, and the large herd of 2,000 swine, nothing remains, according to St. Luke 8 : 35, after this miracle, but one man clothed and in his right mind.

This story can, perhaps, be made to express figuratively the serious struggle in man's mind, between his passions and his instinctive consciousness of right ; or, that those who accept Christ or Christian principles are able to expel the devil or evil thoughts ; but accepted verbatim !!

## CHAPTER IX.

### ST. MATTHEW IS CALLED TO BECOME A DISCIPLE.

The synoptikers relate this event in the following manner :

St. Mat. 9 : 9. " And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom : and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him."

St. Mark 2 : 14. " And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him."

St. Luke 5 : 27. " And after these things he went forth, and saw a Publican named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom : and he said unto him, Follow me.

V. 28. " And he left all, rose up, and followed him."

The phraseology in these three cases is so similar that they may be considered as equivalent to one testimony only, but in this nearly verbal parallel

the evangelists disagree as to the name of the disciple chosen. This incongruity is avoided by apologists, who assume liberally that Levi and Matthew were the same person.

Certainly St. Matthew speaks of his own calling in a most objective manner.

#### THE RESUSCITATION OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER.

Elijah raised from death the widow's son (I. Kings 17 · 19). The prophet Elisha brought to life the Shunammite's son (II. Kings 4 : 34). So Christ, supposed to be the incarnate Elijah, resuscitated the daughter of Jairus.

## CHAPTER X.

### NAMES AND NUMBER OF THE APOSTLES.

St. Mat. 10 : 2, 3, 4.	St. Mark 3 : 16.	St. Luke 6 : 14.
1. Simon, sur. Peter,	1. " "	1. " "
2. Andrew,	2. " "	2. " "
3. James,	3. " "	3. " "
4. John,	4. " "	4. " "
5. Philip,	5. " "	5. " "
6. Bartholomew,	6. " "	6. " "
7. Thomas,	7. " "	7. " "
8. Matthew,	8. " "	8. " "
9. James, son of Al-	9. " "	9. " "
phacus,		
10. Lebbaeus, son of 10.	" "	10. wanting.
Thaddaeus,		
11. Simon,	11. " "	11. " "
12. Judas Iscariot.	12. " "	12. " "
13. ———	13. ———	13. Judas, brother of James.

Each of the Evangelists, in his enumeration of the apostles, mentions twelve ; St. Matthew and St. Mark coincide perfectly, but St. Luke omits one, Lebbaeus, surnamed Thaddaeus, and in his stead in-

serts another named Judas, brother of James, and, consequently, raises the number to thirteen.

There is only one way of harmonizing these lists, and that is based on an hypothesis. It is to suppose Judas to have been the name of the apostle, and, contrary to the statement, that both Lebbaeus and Thaddaeus were surnames. This hypothesis is based upon the analogy of the two names; thus תַּדַּי (Thadai) is supposed to be derived from תַּד (Thad) = breast, or שַׁד (Shad) "mamma." On the other hand, לֵבַי (Lebai) is derived from לֵב (Leb) which signifies the heart.

Thus the deductions made from the analogy of these two names must convince the reader that they not only formed one name, but also a surname of Judas, otherwise he must accept of thirteen apostles.

Matthias, who was chosen to succeed Judas Iscariot (Acts 1: 26), maintained the number of apostles at thirteen.

#### SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Inasmuch as the universal judgment, and other events, which the Jews expected would take place at the coming of the Messiah, did not occur at the advent of Christ, he was necessarily expected to re-

appear, and, erroneously, during the lifetime of his cotemporaries.

At the coming of the Messiah, the Jews expected magical effects in nature: all nations were to be gathered together in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and there judged—the enemies of the Jews were to be destroyed, and all they that were left were to go up to worship God in Jerusalem (Joel 2: 31; Joel 3: 1, 2, 12, 20; Zach. 12: 4–9; Zach. 14: 4, 9, 12, 16, 17).

Now, at the death of Christ, the sun was darkened, and the rocks were rent, but the great judgment in the Valley of Jehoshaphat did not take place, for which reason, St. Paul and the Evangelist aver that these things will happen at the return of Christ. This second coming is altogether original with the followers of Christ. The prophets never foretold nor entertained the slightest idea of such an event.

It does not seem possible, then, that Christ could have spoken the following words, ascribed to him by St. Mat. 16: 28: “Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the son of man coming in his kingdom.”

Nor is it a less notorious error where Christ, in referring to his second coming, is made to say, St.



Mat. 24: 34: "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled."

St. Paul, also, was deceived in his expectation when he wrote, 1 Thess. 4: 16: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel Michael (Danl. 12: 1), with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

V. 17. "Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."

Thus, according to the biblical statement, this event ought, if ever, to have taken place long ago.

#### RESURRECTION AND LAST JUDGMENT.

Connected, in the mind of the Evangelist, with the second coming of Christ, was the belief in the resurrection and judgment of mankind. This belief was derived from the old Jewish doctrine, for Daniel teaches a similar judgment, with this peculiarity, that Michael is to advocate the Jewish interests. Dan. 12: 1, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to

that same time ; and at that time, thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

V. 2. " And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake ; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

That Christ never taught the necessity of a last judgment, to enjoy Paradise, can be deduced from his speech to the malefactor on the cross, St. Luke 23 : 43 : " To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

Again, St. John 11 : 25 : " Jesus said unto her (Martha), I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

From this we infer that man does not first enter into a spiritual life at the indefinite period of a last judgment ; and, also, that souls which can live without a body till the day of judgment, will not be in absolute necessity of a body at that epoch.

Man, believing in immortality, naturally espouses the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, as a necessary vehicle to carry his immortal individuality, for which simple reason, this belief was common, not only to the old Egyptian and Peruvian nations, as is evident from their mummies, but, also, to many savage tribes of America and Africa.

The Jewish doctrine of the resurrection, which is not spoken of before their exile, was apparently derived from Babylon, and the doctrine of Zoroaster (*vide* Zend-Avesta and Boun Dehesch, sec. 31).

## CHAPTER XI.

### MUTUAL ATTESTATION OF CHRIST AND JOHN THE BAPTIST.

It was necessary for the Evangelist to ascribe to Christ all those events prophesied as accompanying the Messiah; it was also desirable to show that John the Baptist was foretold by the prophets as the forerunner of Christ.

To place their identity beyond a doubt, St. Matthew has recourse in this chapter to a singular method.

It consists in adducing an argument in favor of Christ, as the expected Messiah, by making John the Baptist recognize him as such; immediately after which, John the Baptist is made to be identified by Christ, as also having been foretold by the prophets. Although we see at a glance that there exists no basis of recognition in this circular method of identification, yet we will expose the testimony of both, in order to show the improbability of the one, and the impossibility of the other.

On the one hand, is it not perplexing now long

after the baptism at the Jordan, that John the Baptist should send two of his disciples to demand of Christ,

V. 23. "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"

If John was not convinced of Christ's right to the office of a Messiah, by the direct supernatural evidence given him at the Jordan, it is improbable that he would have been influenced by the indirect attestation of his disciples.

We will now consider the second testimony, consisting in a quotation in favor of John the Baptist.

Christ, in speaking of him, is made to say, v. 10: "For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee."

This would convey the idea that John the Baptist was foretold as the precursor of Christ or the Messiah.

Compare with this quotation the original passage of the prophet Malachi, ch. 3: 1: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in."

This is a Messianical passage, the word "*messenger*," in both sentences, refers to one and the same

person ; how, then, does the Evangelist manage to introduce John the Baptist into this verse.

In this wise : Instead of interpreting the passage correctly, which supposes the Lord of hosts, in addressing the prophet, to refer to the Messiah, St. Matthew would make it appear that the Lord addressed Jesus Christ concerning John the Baptist.

To accomplish this, the Evangelist changes the person of the pronoun. In the original we read  $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\sigma\omicron\pi\omicron\upsilon$  (Lepanai) ; or, according to the Septuagint,  $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\sigma\omicron\pi\omicron\upsilon$   $\mu\omicron\upsilon$  (before *my* face), and in nowise “before *thy* face,” as quoted by St. Matthew.

This passage is also referred to by St. Mark, 1 : 2, who, in adducing it, does not make it to be quoted by Christ.

Any person who will take the pains to comprehend the matter, will necessarily allow the present passage to have been misapplied by the Evangelist.

## CHAPTER XII.

CHRIST, IN PERFORMING MIRACLES, DESIRES NOT TO  
BE KNOWN.

IN his exertion to form a Messiah in harmony with his ideal, the Evangelist thinks it necessary to prop up the historical events he relates with efficacious prophecies.

The event narrated in the present paragraph is, as usual, a mere expletive of a prophetical passage.

We shall consider the improbability of the reason given for the performance of an act, and the incorrectness of applying a prophecy to it.

The event related is as follows :

V. 14. "Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

V. 15. "But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence : and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all ;

V. 16. "And charged them that they should not make him known."

This command of secrecy given to great multitudes must have been inefficient, for the Pharisees could well discover Christ's whereabouts by the very multitudes that were supposed not to make him known.

Disregarding this circumstance, we believe, that the command, if given, was to prevent his being delivered up to the Pharisees, who, as we have just seen, had held a council to destroy him.

That Christ had sometimes regard for his personal safety seems to be shown by St. Mark.

Ch. 1 : 42-45. Where Christ cured a leper and said to him, "See thou say nothing to any man."

V. 45. "But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city."

St. Matthew, however, gives no such commonplace reason as this for Christ's command to the multitude; on the contrary, he would make it appear as if Christ merely desired thereby to perform his miracles in a more quiet and less ostentatious manner, or, as remarks the evangelist, in order.

V. 17. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, saying,

V. 18. "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen ;



my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased : I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.

V. 19. "He shall not strive, nor cry ; neither shall any man hear his voice in the street.

V. 20. " A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

V. 21. "And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

Let us consider in the first instance the real intention of the prophet, and then, successively, the correctness of the quotation and the fitness of its application.

The quotation is made from Isaiah, ch. 42 : 1-4. The prophet is here engaged in an admonitory and consolatory discourse to the Jews at the end of the exile.

Isaiah believed himself called to announce their future unto nations. He is here evidently referring to a person then existing, and, probably, to himself, as shown by the verbs being in the past tense.

The Evangelist translates, "I *will* put my spirit upon him ;" but in the original text it stands :

Isaiah 42 : 1. "I *have* put my spirit upon him."  
Again,

Is. 42 : 3. "He shall bring forth judgment unto

truth," is translated, v. 20: "Till he send forth judgment unto victory."

This verse betrays the idea prevailing in the time of the Evangelist, that Christ would soon reappear as the victorious Messiah.

Finally, Is. 42 : 4. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth ; and the isles shall wait for his law," is rendered, v. 21 : "And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

These few alterations were desirable to St. Matthew in order to harmonize his statements with the subjective treatment of prophecy

In conclusion we will remark that the English translation of the word גוֹיִם (Lagoim) is incorrect. It means "*to nations*," but the English translators of the Bible have preferred to render it "*to the Gentiles*," as such an interpretation would make St. Matthew's quotation appear more correct.

## CHAPTER XIII.

CHRIST'S REASON FOR SPEAKING IN PARABLES.—

ST. MATTHEW'S REASON.

IN this chapter Christ speaks to the people in parables : in

V. 10. "His disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou in parables." Jesus answered :

V. 13. "Because they seeing, see not ; and hearing, they hear not ; neither do they understand."

Thus, to render more easy the comprehension of his doctrine, Christ exposes it under the form of parables.

This reason, however, is insufficient for St. Matthew, who thus proceeds :

V. 34. "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables ; and without a parable spake he not unto them.

V. 35. "That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables ; *I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*"

St. Matthew has quoted this passage erroneously, in order to ascribe to Christ's character the veneration attached to a respected antiquity, and to embody his account with another prophecy.

It is necessary to know that the 78th Psalm, from which St. Matthew makes his quotation, contains a poetical sketch of that part of Jewish history handed down by their forefathers.

The Psalmist speaks as follows :

Ps. 78 : 2. "I will open my mouth in parables ;  
*I will utter dark sayings of old.*"

This passage contains nothing of that mysterious secret which had been kept from the foundation of the world, and is now revealed by Christ under the form of parables.

Admitting, for a moment, this verse to refer to Christ, we find that it would form with the next following verse of the Psalmist a most clamorous contradiction.

Thus by joining the two verses in their logical connections, according to St. Matthew, we have, "I (Christ) will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

Ps. 78 : 3. "Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us."

No further comment is necessary.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE TRANSFIGURATION.

THE Jews expected the greatest analogy, if not identification, to exist between Moses, Elias, and the Messiah; besides, they believed that both Moses and Elias would reappear at the advent of the Messiah. (Debarim Rabba, sec. 3, fol. 255, col. 2.)

This belief is also evident in the reply of the disciples to Christ.

St. Mat. 16: 14. "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

It is, therefore, to satisfy this expectation of the Jews that both Moses and Elias appeared and talked with Christ at his transfiguration; and in order to sustain the expected analogy between them, the Evangelist narrates the following events of the transfiguration, as strikingly concurrent with those which befell Moses on Mt. Sinai.

As Moses ascended Mt. Sinai, accompanied by Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu—Exod. 24: 9—so Christ

“taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them into a high mountain apart.”—St. Mat. 17 : 1.

As “the glory of the Lord abode upon Mt. Sinai,” and the cloud covered it—Exod. 24 : 16—so “A bright cloud overshadowed Christ and his disciples.”—Mat. 17 : 15.

As “the Lord called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud”—Exod. 24 : 16—so also in this case, “Behold a voice out of the cloud.”—Mat. 17 : 5.

As “the face of Moses shone when he came down from the mount”—Exod. 34 : 30—so “Christ’s face did shine as the sun.”—Mat. 17 : 3.

Thus there exists a perfect parallel between these two events.

Another point that betrays a knowledge of the Old Testament, which the Evangelist has, with more or less skill, rendered applicable to his gospel, is the following sentence, pronounced by the voice at the transfiguration :

“This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased : hear ye him.”—Mat. 17 : 5.

Now there are two passages of the Old Testament containing similar ideas, and both were considered Messianic.

The one is Ps. 2 : 7 : “The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my son ;” the other, Isaiah 42 : 1 :

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.”

Considering the frequency with which historical statements have been constructed from parts of the Old Testament, and the facility of application in this instance, we conclude, that the present evangelical account can more properly be reflected upon than believed.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### CHRIST ENTERS JERUSALEM RIDING UPON AN ASS.

IN the latter part of the preceding chapter, Christ and his disciples leave Jericho, and, in this chapter,

V. 1, "They draw nigh unto Jerusalem," which they enter on the same day.

With this account, both St. Mark, 11 : 1, and St. Luke, 19 : 29, agree ; but, according to St. John, Christ arrived in Bethany six days before the feast of the passover. Thus St. John, 12 : 1, "Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany," after which he made his entrance into Jerusalem.

Thus the Evangelists disagree in the time of this event, as well as in the following account of a miraculous indication by Christ.

On arriving at Bethphage, Christ said unto two of his disciples,

V. 2. "Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her ; loose them, and bring them unto me."



Contrary to this, St. Mark, 11 : 2, and St. Luke, 19 : 30, testify, that the disciples only found a colt as foretold by Christ. Thus,

“Ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.”

But by far the most reasonable testimony on this subject is that of St. John, who informs us, St. John 12 : 14, that “Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon,” thus dispensing with every supernatural indication.

This miracle, which appears to have been performed without a motive, is thus explained by the Evangelist.

V. 4. “All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

V. 5. “Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.”

The greater part of this quotation is taken from Zach. 9 : 9. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lonely, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.”

This figurative language in the prophet, indicates the approaching reign of peace in Jerusalem in the stead of war.

It is placed in opposition to the next following verse.

V. 10. "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem."

In the English translation of this passage, two animals are designated.

Thus, Zach. 9 : 9, "Lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." The prophet, however, had but one animal in mind; thus the phrase should read :

"Upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass." Yet it is true that two animals can rigorously be made to be referred to.

Whether we admit of but one or two animals, the Evangelists still remain in contradiction; for St. John, who adduces this passage, makes it refer to but one animal only.

St. John, ch. 12 : 15. "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt."

If there were two animals, it is improbable that Christ rode upon both of them. St. Matthew felt this, and is at a loss how to fulfill this part of the passage: he merely informs us that the disciples, v. 7, "Brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon."

Admitting there were two animals, this account is much too vague for comprehension.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### CHRIST'S PROPHECY AGAINST THE PHARISEES.

IN a discourse to the Scribes and Pharisees, Christ addresses them thus, v. 34: "Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets and wise men, and Scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.

V. 35. "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

This prophecy, which reveals to the disciples the cruel death they had to expect, was far from consoling; besides, the Pharisees are here, with one stroke, made responsible for all the righteous blood shed, from the time of Abel down to the time of Zacharias.

The Evangelist supposes here, that Zacharias was the last of the prophets who was killed, but we find,

in Jeremiah 26 : 23, that Uriah was slain at a later period.

Again, St. Matthew, or, if we admit of the above account as exact, Christ committed a most notorious historical error, by quoting Barachias as the father of Zacharias ; for, in II. Chron. 24 : 20, 21, we find, that the father of Zacharias was Jehoida.

It follows, that the solemn condemnation of the Pharisees remained undetermined, and, in charity, we hope, by this error, entirely nullified.

It is a matter of some surprise, that St. Matthew should advance an error with such solemnity, and especially as here many lives are made to depend upon the correctness of an historical detail.

Happily, these errors and artful productions, which show the great incorrectness of the Evangelists, and which prove the necessity of inducing into our belief a reasonable sentiment of conviction, cannot affect the truth of those inspired principles of moral action wherein true religion consists, and are of benefit *only* in overthrowing the blind and bigoted acceptance of the Evangelistical statements.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### CHRIST FORETELLS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE.

V. 1. "And Jesus went out and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple."

This act of the disciples is unlikely, but becomes comprehensible, when we consider that it offers a motive to Christ to address them concerning the temple. Thus:

V. 2. "And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Christ then continues to relate, in a prophetic manner, numerous signs which would precede the destruction of the temple *and the end of the world*. Among other things, v. 7: "There shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes;" but now the Evangelist, by an inadvertent over-eagerness to make out an overwhelming prophecy, forgets himself, by making Christ prophecy as follows.

V. 14. "And *this Gospel* of the kingdom *shall be preached* in all the world, for a witness unto all nations: and *then shall the end come.*"

This spoils the whole; for surely the Gospel of St. Matthew was not written at the time this speech was made.

As Christ foretold all of these signs in one and the same discourse, while on the Mount of Olives, we conclude that all of the signs which have taken place, such as the destruction of the temple, happened previously to the writing of this Gospel, or, in other words, that past events are here related in a prophetic manner.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER; OR, THE LAST SUPPER.

THE Jews commemorated, by a feast, the event of the slaying of the first-born in Egypt, when the Lord “passed over” the houses of the Hebrews.

As, at this feast, a lamb was sacrificed, so, at the holy supper, Christ, or the “Lamb of God,” serves as the offering.

It is to celebrate this feast, that Christ and his disciples go up to Jerusalem.

And it is this feast which Christ is supposed to have converted into the holy supper; or, at least, at which the sacrament of the holy supper was instituted.

Therefore, we shall consider the action and saying of Christ, upon which the belief in this institution is based.

Thus, St. Matthew narrates, 26 : 26, “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it,

and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

V. 27. "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it :

V. 28. "For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

As regards the expression, "this is my body," τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ σῶμά μου, the copula ἐστι, which means both "is" and "*signifies*," does not occur in Aramaic, כְּהָהֵנָּה בְּהָהֵנָּה, the language of Christ.

That Christ expressed himself here figuratively is evident from the next following, v. 29 : "But I say unto you I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

The same figure is employed by Christ on another occasion—thus St. John, 6 : 33 : "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

Again, v. 35, "I am that bread of life;" v. 58, "He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

In a word, on the present occasion, no one but a cannibal can suppose that Christ could have offered to his disciples his own flesh to be eaten, and his own blood to drink.

Concerning the breaking of bread, and drinking



of wine, Christ says, Luke 22 : 19, "This do in remembrance of me."

Can this command constitute a holy institution?

Should we bear Christ in mind while at table, or at the time of celebrating the feast of the passover?

Of two things one : either this command was confined to the disciples, or it was a general command including all his followers, in which last case no anterior consecration of the bread by a particular hierarchical class is necessary.

A similar institution existed among almost every nation of antiquity.

#### DENIAL OF CHRIST BY PETER.

The Evangelist relates here a story of Christ prophesying the treble denial of Peter before the crowing of a cock.

As there are four Evangelists of equal credibility, it is but just to consider their several testimonies, in order to deduce therefrom, if possible, one simple, uniform account.

To begin, St. Matthew testifies that Peter made his denial of Christ to the several following persons.

V. 69. "A damsel."

V. 71. "Another maid."

V. 73. "Those that stood by."

St. Luke informs us that the persons to whom Peter denied his acquaintance with Christ were,

Ch. 22 : 56. "A certain maid."

V. 58. "A man."

V. 59. "Another man."

Thus this Evangelist, through inadvertency, converts St. Matthew's and St. Luke's "maid" into a "man."

There is another slight discrepancy between the Evangelists in this matter.

According to three of them, Peter makes his *treble* denial before the cock crows.

St. Mark, on the contrary, testifies that,

St. Mark 14 : 30, "Jesus said unto Peter, before the cock crow *twice*, thou shalt deny me thrice." He, therefore, makes his cock to crow twice, vs. 68-72, causing a confusion thereby.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE HISTORY OF JUDAS.—THE TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST —THE INSCRIPTION, TWO THIEVES, ECLIPSE, CHRIST'S EXCLAMATION

THE history of Judas appears to have been modeled entirely upon certain passages of the Old Testament. Even Christ is made to testify, that the idea of the betrayal was motivated by certain prophetic passages.

St. John 13 : 18. "That the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me."

Effectually David exclaims in Psalm 41 : 9, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Thus Christ is made to apply to himself a verse referring to David, and that it may be made to assume a prophetic and vividly historical character, St. Matthew, cognizant of the very language of this Psalm, makes Christ use the same expression ;

thus, St. Mat. 26, 23, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me."

We will consider now the account of the thirty pieces of silver as the price of Christ and of the Akeldama.

Judas gives back the thirty pieces of silver which he had received from the high priest as the price of the betrayal of Christ.

With this money, the high priests purchased the potter's field, now called Akeldama, or the field of blood.

St. Matthew continues, after these acts were accomplished,

V. 9. "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value ;

V. 10. "And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

The Evangelist here is mistaken. His first error appears to have proceeded from inadvertency ; for he thinks to have extracted the above passage from Jeremiah, whereas it is from Zachariah.

In prophecy, exactness is of primary importance ; the prophet, or subject, is perhaps of more consequence than the object. Since, therefore, St. Matthew

was mistaken in the one, it is but just to conclude that he might have erred in the other, or in making Judas Iscariot the object of prophecy.

The prophecy adduced isolatedly by St. Matthew is a contorted approximation to the following passage of the prophet Zachariah, 11 : 13. "And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter ; a goodly price that I was prized at of them.

"And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord."

"The first sentence : "And the Lord saith unto me, Cast it unto the potter," is omitted by St. Matthew in his quotation, as highly inappropriate.

"A goodly price that I was prized at of them" is thus quoted, "the price of him that was valued ;" to this is added, "whom they of the children of Israel did value," which, although quite original with the Evangelist, is, nevertheless, very explanatory as determining the reference of the passage to Christ.

The second sentence, "And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord," is translated, "And they took the thirty pieces and gave them for the potter's field."

St. Matthew finishes his quotation thus : "And (they that took the thirty pieces of silver, i. e., the

high priests) gave them for the potter's field, as *the Lord appointed me.*"

The Evangelist should have said, "*as the Lord appointed them,*" to satisfy both logic and grammar; he is led astray, however, by the desire of inserting; cost what it may, the first part of the original passage, viz.: "The Lord saith unto me;" introduced too late, it serves here only to form an illogical phrase, and to show another among the numerous contortions the original passage has been made to undergo in order that it may appear to be fitly applied to the history of Judas Iscariot.

It is worthy of remark that, in the Chaldean Bible, the substantive יִזְרָר (iozer), potter, is considered as an orthographical error, as standing for יִזְרָר (aozer), treasurer, or, rather, הַ יִזְרָר (ha-iozar), the treasury, which is apparently the more passable word, and is sanctioned by most of the Jewish Rabbis.

In the history of Judas, there is one other point to be considered, which is his death.

To support their theory of Christ's being the expected Messiah of the Jews, the Evangelists must find\* as many prophecies as possible in their holy

\* The number of prophecies referring to Christ has been greatly increased since the Gospels were written. The English translators of the Bible have seized every opportunity to state it,

writings, and seek for them especially in those connected with David, as the Messiah was to have been David resuscitated (Jeremiah 30 : 9).

We have already seen that the whole story of Judas was motived by a passage in one of David's psalms, when he laments his betrayal by an intimate friend.

On turning to the history of David, we find, in II. Samuel 17 : 23, that "Ahithophel went home and hanged himself;" so, also, according to St. Matthew, v. 5, "Judas went and hanged himself."

But, in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, his death is made to occur in a manner independent of his will, thus:

Ch. 1 : 18. "Falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."

We will add that,

Matthew 19 : 28 (Judas is one of the twelve who is to sit upon a throne and judge Israel).

#### THE TRIAL OF CHRIST.

The Evangelist has concentrated in this chapter all of those events referring to the death of Christ,

whenever they conceived a writing in the Old Testament referred to or prophesied Christ.

*Vide* Psalms II., XLIV., XLV., XLVII., CIX., CX., etc., etc., besides continual additions are being made by preachers of every sect and creed.

which could be considered as fulfilling Messianical passages.

Thus Christ, on his trial, is said, v. 12, "to have answered nothing," to convert into an historical fact the Messianical passage,

Isaiah 53: 7. "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

As at the feast of the passover, of two chosen rams one was set free by lot, so here of two prisoners, one was liberated.

It is a curious coincidence, that the prisoner who regained his liberty on the occasion was named Barabba (בָּרַבְבָּא), or the son of the father, which was also a cognomen of Christ.

The other prisoner, Christ, who was to replace the lamb of the passover, was necessarily chosen as the offering. St. Matthew continues,

V. 30. "The soldiers spit upon him and smote him on the head"—this was no doubt to fulfill

Isaiah 50: 6. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

That nothing might be omitted,

V. 34, "They gave him vinegar to drink, mixed with gall." To fulfill,



Psalm 69: 21, "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

In this same Psalm, David, still speaking, exclaims,

V. 5, "O God, thou knowest my foolishness: and my sins are not hid from thee."

This verse, then, must also be applied to the Messiah, for they both refer to the same person.

Nor is it a vague supposition, that vinegar and gall were given to Christ, merely out of regard to the above verse of the Psalmist; for, according to St. John, Christ himself testifies thereto—and this under the following peculiar circumstances.

Christ is already crucified; and,

St. John 19: 28, "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, *that the scripture might be fulfilled*, saith, I thirst.

V. 29. "Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

V. 30. "When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

It is highly improbable that Christ, after having been three hours on the cross, should have observed that the prophecy of the vinegar was still to be fulfilled, and especially so, when we reflect that ac-

cording to St. Matthew, 27 : 34, he received of that drink before the crucifixion.

As this event, therefore, is made to take place only to fulfill a passage of the Psalmist, which passage in nowise refers to Christ, we conclude that this event, as here related, never occurred.

#### THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.

In the description of the crucifixion of Christ, we shall treat the events in the succession followed by St. Matthew.

The Evangelist commences thus:

V. 35. "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet."

Psalm 22 : 18. "They *parted* my garments among them, and upon my vesture *did* they cast lots."

It is upon this, the 22d Psalm, that most of the events of the crucifixion have been traced. To show the impropriety of making this Psalm, in which the verbs are in the past tense, refer to Jesus Christ, it is necessary to know that David, in his complaint and prayer to God, exclaims, in the same Psalm,

V. 5, "Our fathers trusted in thee."

And again, in v. 6, "I am a worm and no man."

These verses, then, also, necessarily refer to

Christ, as well as those which have been picked out as particularly Messianical ; for the same person is referred to throughout the whole Psalm.

The only reasonable explanation for forming Messianical events from passages in the Psalmist appears to be, that the early tradition expected the Messiah to be not only a descendant of David, but David resuscitated (Jeremiah 30 : 9).

As it is necessary that a prophecy of a particular event to be fulfilled must previously have been made, so this particular case, in which the garments of Christ are said to have been divided by lot to fulfill a prophecy, we conclude to be no historical fact, because such a prophecy was never made.

St. Matthew continues, in v. 37, " And (they) set up over his head his accusation written, This is Jesus the King of the Jews."

Inscriptions such as this should be copied exactly. The Evangelists, however, were more particularly bent upon making Christ to be recognized as the Messiah by a final act.

That this inscription is incorrect, and that none of them wrote from a personal knowledge of the thing, is evident from the fact, that each one renders it differently. Thus :

St. Matthew 27 : 37. " This is Jesus the King of the Jews."

St. Mark 15 : 26. "The King of the Jews."

St. Luke 23 : 38. "This is the King of the Jews."

St. John 19 : 19. "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews."\*

#### THE TWO THIEVES.

V. 38. "Then were there two thieves crucified with him: one on the right hand, and another on the left."

According to St. Mark,

Ch. 15 : 28, He was crucified together with two thieves to fulfill the scripture saying,

Isaiah 53 : 12, "And he was numbered with the transgressors."

This is the second time this same prophecy has been made to be fulfilled, but by the most dissimilar events; for, according to St. Luke, Christ said to his disciples, some time before his crucifixion,

Ch. 22 : 36, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one."

V. 37. "For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, *And he was reckoned among the transgressors.*"

\* Harmonists imagine three inscriptions to have been written, one in Hebrew, in Greek, and Latin. This may have been the case, but neither of the Evangelists mentions it.

To fulfill this prophecy was the only ostensible object for arming his disciples at that time, as they were not allowed to use them in his defense; and, although the prophecy was thereby fulfilled to the satisfaction of St. Luke, nevertheless, St. Mark is here excusable, perhaps; for the repetition of the fulfillment of a prophecy only serves to make more sure.

Concerning the malefactors, the Evangelists do not agree so well.

Thus, both St. Matthew and St. Mark (15: 32) say that "They that were crucified with him reviled him," while, on the contrary, St. John asserts, that only,

23: 39, "One of the malefactors railed on him." The other,

V. 42, "Said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

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We have now to consider another event, taken from the 22d Psalm, as follows:

St. Matthew 27: 39. "And they that passed by, reviled him, wagging their heads, saying,

V. 43. "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God."

St. Matthew does not add, that this was done that a prophecy might be fulfilled; but, if we turn to the 22d Psalm of David, we find the two following parallel verses:

V. 7. "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

V. 8. "He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him seeing he delighteth in him." We must conclude, that this event, as related, did not occur, as the 22d Psalm does not, as we have seen, refer to Christ.

#### THE ECLIPSE.

V. 45. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." We learn from the Talmud that the Rabbis taught that, among other causes of an eclipse of the sun, one was, when at the death of a Judge the last honors were left unpaid (Tract Succa, fol. 26, col. 1).

The above event was related to fulfill a passage of the prophet.

Amos 8: 9. "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon." But if, according to St. Matthew and St. John 19: 14, Christ was cruci-

fied at the sixth hour, or at midday, St. Mark exclaims with equal precision,

Ch. 15 : 23. " And it was the third hour and they crucified him."

#### CHRIST'S EXCLAMATION.

V. 46. " And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice saying : Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani ? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me."

This expression, altogether unworthy of Christ if he be considered as a free-will offering, becomes partially comprehensible when we consider that it was used by Christ's great prototype, David.

Effectually we find, that that particularly Messianical Psalm, 22, commences with the expression, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring ?"

Leaving St. Matthew's account, let us consider several events of the crucifixion stated by

St. John 19 : 32. " Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

V. 33. " But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs."

This becomes comprehensible, when we reflect that it furnishes the occasion to complete the parallel between Christ and the lamb of the passover.

Christ's bones were not broken, on account of the prohibition by Moses, concerning the lamb of the passover, Exod. 12 : 46 : "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof."

St. John continues :

V. 34 "One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

Which undoubtedly was done to fulfill Zach. 12 : 10. "And they shall look at me whom they have pierced."

The extraordinary circumstance of water and blood flowing from the wound is explained later by St. John, thus :

Ch. 5 : 6. "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only but by water and blood."

#### EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED AT THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

At the advent of the Messiah, the prophets foretold the happening of many miraculous events, some of which the Evangelists relate as having accompanied the death of Christ; by far the more import-



ant, however, are omitted, it being impossible to make past events of them : but feeling the necessity of adducing these prophecies, the Evangelists, as well as St. Paul, imagine another or second coming of Christ as the Messiah, an event unknown to the prophets, and affirm that, on this ultimate occasion, the other great prophecies, here omitted, will be fulfilled. At the same time, however, they unhappily state, that this second coming of Christ will occur in their own day.

At the death of Christ, according to St. Math. v. 45, "Darkness was over all the land."

V. 51. "Behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom : and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent ;

V. 52. "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose,

V. 53. "And came out of the graves after his resurrection."

The participation of nature here certainly produces a tragie effect. The rending of the veil of the temple figuratively signifies that not only the priest but every one might enter into the holy place, which in the temple was sheltered by a veil ; in other words, the partiality of Judaism was abolished (*vide* Hebrews 6 : 19 ; 9 : 6 ; 10 : 19, 20).

In the stated facts, that the bodies of many saints

arose, but did not come out of their graves until after the resurrection of Christ, certainly a most remarkable occurrence is presented for our belief.

But we shall draw no conclusion before considering the other events which should have taken place at the same time.

EVENTS WHICH SHOULD HAVE OCCURRED AT THE COMING OF  
THE MESSIAH.

Joel 3 : 12. "The heathen shall be awakened."

Joel 2 : 31. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."

Zach. 14 : 4. And in that day, the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half toward the south."

Besides,

Zach. 14 : 12. A great plague would consume away the eyes, tongues, and flesh of the enemies of the Jews."

Joel 2 : 31 ; 3 : 15. "The moon would be turned into blood, and all light from the stars cease."

Joel 3 : 2. "And the great judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat would take place."

EVENTS PROPHECIED BY ST. MATTHEW, AS ACCOMPANYING  
THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, AND THE TIME THEREOF.

Ch. 24 : 29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun and moon shall be darkened, the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

V. 31. "The elect shall be gathered together from one end of heaven to the other."

Ch. 25 : 34. "The righteous shall inherit heaven."

V. 41. "And the wicked shall be cast into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Ch. 24 : 34. "*Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled: (Vide also St. Mark 13 : 30 ; St. Luke 21 : 32 ; I. Thes. 4 : 16).*

From these last three paragraphs we draw the following conclusion :

The error of the Evangelists and St. Paul, respecting the second coming of Christ in their day, must be conceded ; with this, the events prophecied, as accompanying that second coming, fall to the ground ; but these events are inseparably connected in the prophets with those detailed by the Evangelists as having occurred at the death of Christ, consequently, these miraculous, prophetical events could not, at that time, thus partially have taken place, or the prophets were mistaken, and with them the Evangelists.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE BURIAL, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

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#### THE EMBALMMENT OF CHRIST.

OF this event, St. John and St. Luke give different accounts.

According to St. John,

Ch. 19 : 38. "Joseph of Arimathea;" and,

V. 39, "Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred weight," and,

V. 40, "Took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

"And laid it in a new sepulchre."

But according to St. Luke,

Ch. 23 : 50, 53. "Joseph of Arimathea took the body,

V. 53. "And wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre."

V. 55. "And the women also beheld how his body was laid.

V. 56. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath-day according to the commandment.

Ch. 24 : 1. "And upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared."

The women saw how Christ was buried, as the manner of the Jews is to bury (St. John 19 : 40), and yet, according to St. Luke, they prepared spices for a second embalment.

St. Luke would hardly have given so detailed an account of this second intention to embalm, had he known that Christ was already buried after the manner of the Jews, and wrapped in a hundred pounds of aloes and myrrh.

#### THE GUARD OF THE SEPULCHRE.

The Evangelist informs us that a guard was placed to watch the sepulchre.

Mary Magdalene certainly knew nothing of this guard, for, turning back from the sepulchre, and mistaking Christ for the gardener (St. John, 20 : 15), "She saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

The naïvete of the Evangelist is, however, unsurpassed, when he says that the chief priest taught the soldiers to say (St. Matt. 28 : 13) : “ That the disciples came by night and stole him away, while we [soldiers] were asleep.”

That the soldiers must represent themselves as cognizant of what was taking place while they were asleep, reflects severely on the intelligence of the high priest, and the credulity of Pilate.

The Evangelist adds,

V. 16. “ This saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.”

It is in nowise surprising that false statements of the whole event were propagated among the Jews in those days ; for the Evangelists themselves contain enough evident proofs of the contradictory accounts current in their day concerning the resurrection.

#### THE LENGTH OF TIME CHRIST WAS IN THE SEPULCHRE.

Christ was buried by night (St. John 19 : 39) ; and it was on Friday night (St. Luke 23 : 54). “ And THAT day was the preparation, and the Sabbath (Saturday) drew on.” Christ had risen before dawn on Sunday morning (St. John, 20 : 1). “ Now, on the first day of the week (Sunday) cometh Mary Magdalene, early, when it was yet dark, unto the

sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre." Thus Christ remained in the sepulchre about thirty-six hours—Friday night, Saturday, and Saturday night—for he had arisen before morn on the first day of the week, or Sunday.

How, then, can we accept of St. Matthew's assertion, that Christ said (St. Matt. 12:40): "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"——?

#### THE FIRST VISIT TO THE SEPULCHRE.

Concerning those who saw Christ after the resurrection, Archdeacon Paley remarks (Part II. chap. 8): "It was not one person but many who saw him; they saw him not only separately, but together; not only by night, but by day; not at a distance, but near; not once, but several times; they not only saw him, but touched him, communed with him, ate with him, examined his person to satisfy their doubts."

However true these remarks may be, if we accept the testimony of the Evangelists without comparison, yet, when we place them in parallel, we find that their successive evidence, instead of being additional, is entirely nullified by contradiction.

The first persons who visited the sepulchre were, according to St. Matthew 28 : 1, " Mary Magdalene and the other Mary ;" according to St. Mark 16 : 1, " Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome ;" St. Luke 24 : 10, " Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women." But St. John 20 : 1, only mentions " Mary Magdalene." Thus, whoever among the female friends of Christ attended at this first visit, the presence of all of them is insured by the gradual but all-conclusive testimony of the Evangelists collectively.

#### THE ANGELS OF THE SEPULCHRE.

Upon arriving at the sepulchre, these persons, no matter who nor how many there were, saw :

St. Matt. 28 : 2. " One angel, sitting outside."

St. Mark 16 : 5. " One young man inside."

St. Luke 24 : 4. " Two men in shining garments."

St. John 20 : 12. " Two angels."

#### THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF CHRIST.

According to St. Matthew, Christ made his first appearance to the *two Marys* returning from the sepulchre, thus (28 : 9) : " And as they went to tell his disciples, behold Jesus met them."

St. Mark 16 : 19. " Now when Jesus was risen,



early the first day of the week, he appeared first to *Mary Magdalene*, out of whom he had cast seven devils."

St. Luke 24 : 13. "Christ appeared first to *two women on the road to a village called Emmaus*."

V. 18. "The name of the one was *Cleopas*."

Upon seeing Christ, the women, St. Matt. 28 : 9, "Came and held him by the feet, and worshiped him."

According to St. John, 20 : 17, "Jesus saith unto her (Mary Magdalene) touch me not."

#### CHRIST'S MEETING WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

According to St. Matthew, Christ meets his disciples first in Galilee, thus 28 : 10, "Then said Jesus unto the women : Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me ;

V. 16. "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

V. 17. "And when they saw him they worshiped him ; but some doubted."

But St. Luke says, 24 : 33, "The eleven were gathered together in Jerusalem."

V. 36. "And as they spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them."

## THE LAST INTERVIEW.

The synoptikers make Christ appear only once to his disciples after his resurrection.

But according to St. John 21 : 14, "He appeared three times."

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Christ's last interview with his disciples takes place, St. Matthew 28 : 16, "On a mountain in Galilee;" St. Mark 16 : 14, "As they sat at meat in Jerusalem;" St. Luke 24 : 50, "In Bethany;" St. John 21 : 1, "At the sea of Tiberias."

## THE ASCENSION.

St. Matthew and St. John merely round off Christ's last speech and give no intimation of an ascension.

St. Mark relates thus shortly this event, Ch. 16 : 19, "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."

St. Luke's account is equally short and vague, ch. 24 : 51, "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

This latter account harmonizes with its biblical

prototype, II. Kings 2 : 11, "Where Elijah was suddenly parted asunder from Elisha, and went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

No doubt the Evangelist asserts that "Christ sat on the right hand of God" with as much knowledge of the fact as he ascended into heaven, for testimony worthy of belief with regard to such an event must be taken seriously. No doubt the seat on the right hand was a seat of honor among the Jews, and there is no doubt that, if St. Mark knew it to be true that Christ sat on the right hand of God, St. Mark must have seen God.

With regard to this, the conclusion must be drawn by individual faith or enlightenment.















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